



## Excited Tamannaah

Tamannaah reflects on evolving opportunities for female actors, expressing excitement about the new projects shaping her career

LEISURE | P2



## Bid to prevent attack

Britain deploys military vessels to prevent any attacks on cables and pipelines by Russian submarines in and around British waters

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Growth at risk

India's expected economic growth of 6.6% for fiscal 2027 could face significant risks as the Iran war fans inflation worries

BUSINESS | P11



## Women rule ring

Reigning world champion Minakshi Hooda, Preeti Pawar lead the gold rush for India in the finals Asian Boxing Championships

SPORTS | P12

## 72.38% pass OSSTET: BSE

AGENCIES

**Cuttack, April 9:** The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha, Thursday announced the results of the latest Odisha Secondary School Teacher Eligibility Test (OSSTET).

According to the BSE, the overall pass percentage stands at an impressive 72.38 per cent. "Candidates can access their results on the BSE websites - www.bseodisha.ac.in and www.bseodisha.nic.in. Qualified candidates will be able to download their digitised eligibility certificates from 5 pm onwards by paying the required fee. Hard copies of the certificates will be issued later by the board," the statement said. The OSSTET was conducted January 21, with a total of 56,456 candidates appearing for Paper I and Paper II for teaching positions in government, aided, and recognised unaided secondary schools in Odisha.

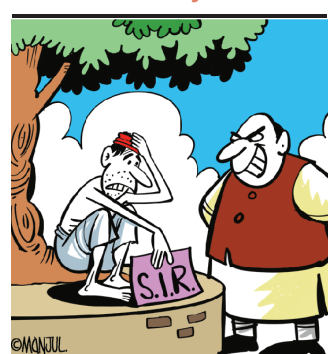
## PIL seeks stringent Aadhaar guidelines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** A petition filed in the Supreme Court has sought direction to the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to issue new Aadhaar cards only to citizens up to the age of six years, and frame stringent guidelines for its issuance to adolescents and adults, to stop infiltrators from masquerading as Indian citizens.

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay has also sought a direction to the authorities to install display boards at common service centres stating that the 12-digit unique identification number is only a "proof of identity" and not a proof of citizenship, address or date of birth. Besides all states and UT, the plea has made UIDAI - which is the authority that issues Aadhaar cards - and Union ministries of Home, Law and Justice, and E&IT as parties. The plea has been filed through lawyer Ashwani Dubey.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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**POLL DAY:** People cross the Brahmaputra river on a boat to cast their votes in the Assam Assembly elections, in Darrang, Thursday (Report P3)

PTI PHOTO

## 3 MINORS DROWN IN VILLAGE POND

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Umerkote, April 9:** Three minor girls drowned in a pond while bathing in Kursi village under this block in Nabarangpur district Thursday, police said.

The deceased were identified as Sandhya Gond, Sandhita Gond, and Bhoomika Gond, all aged between five and six years. The tragic incident has cast a pall of gloom and mourning over the village.

According to reports, Sandhya and Sandhita, daughters of Rajaman Gond, along with Bhoomika, daughter of Balsai Gond from the Uparpara area of the village, had gone to a pond near their house in the morning. While bathing, they accidentally ventured into deep water and drowned.

When the children did not return home for a long time, family members searched for them but could not locate them. Later, a villager spotted their bodies floating in the pond and informed the families.

With the help of villagers, the bodies were recovered and brought out of the water.

Following the incident, a written complaint was lodged with the police. SDPO Subhendu Sabar and IIC Bipin Kumar Bag reached the spot and launched an investigation. The bodies were sent to Umerkote hospital for postmortem and later handed over to the families.

## Israel seeks Lebanon talks

REUTERS

**Jerusalem/Beirut/Islamabad, April 9:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday he is seeking direct talks with Beirut, a day after the worst bombardment of the war killed more than 300 people in Lebanon and placed Donald Trump's US-Iran ceasefire in jeopardy.

Trump announced a ceasefire in the six-week-old Iran conflict late Tuesday, just hours before he threatened to destroy Iran's entire civilisation. In Pakistan, authorities were preparing for the first round of US-Iran talks, locking down parts of the capital Islamabad.

But there was no sign Iran was lifting its near-total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has caused the worst disruption to global energy supplies in history, with Israel's ongoing attacks on Lebanon cited as a key sticking point.

In a defiant statement, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said Thursday that Iran would be "resolute in avenging" the deaths of his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the country's "martyrs" and "will take management of the Strait of Hormuz into a new phase." The statement attributed to Khamenei was read on



Men inspect damage to their home destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut, Thursday

state TV. He has not been seen in public since he took over from his father, who was killed on the first day of the war. "... We will certainly not leave unpunished the criminal aggressors who attacked our country. We will undoubtedly demand compensation for every single damage inflicted," he said in the statement.

In the first 24 hours of the ceasefire, just a single oil products tanker and five dry bulk carriers sailed through a strait that typically accommodated 140 ships a day before the war, accounting for around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas flows. Netanyahu, whose government rebuffed a historic offer for direct talks with Lebanon last month, said in a statement that he had given instructions to start peace talks as soon as possible, which would also include disarming Iran-aligned militant group Hezbollah.

Hezbollah lawmaker Ali

lah. "The negotiations will focus on disarming Hezbollah and establishing peaceful relations between Israel and Lebanon," he said. An hour before Netanyahu's statement, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said he was working on a diplomatic track on this matter that was starting to be seen "positively" by international actors.

A senior Lebanese official told Reuters that Lebanon had spent the last day pushing for a temporary ceasefire to allow for broader talks with Israel, describing the effort as a "separate track but the same model" as the U.S.-Iran truce.

Israel was preparing to scale down its attacks in Lebanon, a senior Israeli official said on Thursday. Another Israeli official said talks with Lebanon were expected to begin in Washington next week.

Fayyad said in a statement Thursday that the group rejected direct negotiations with Israel and the Lebanese government should demand a ceasefire as a precondition to further steps. It was the first comment from Hezbollah after Netanyahu said his country would start talks immediately. Washington, along with Israel, which invaded Lebanon last month in parallel with the war on Iran to root out Hezbollah, say Lebanon is not covered by Trump's ceasefire.

But Iran and Pakistan, which acted as mediator, say it was explicitly part of the deal. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, expected to head the Iranian delegation opposite US Vice President JD Vance, posted on social media that Lebanon and the rest of Iran's "axis" of regional allies were inseparable parts of any ceasefire. A Pakistani source said Pakistan was working on ceasefires for Lebanon as well as Yemen, where Israel has also hit Iran-aligned forces.

Earlier Thursday, Israel kept up its bombing of Beirut's southern suburbs and other parts of the country, Lebanese state media said.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said the death toll since March 2 had risen to 1,888 dead and more than 6,000 wounded.

## Jail for undeclared power cut, says CM

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Any unannounced power cut, especially during summer, will be treated as a punishable offence, and those responsible will face strict action, including imprisonment, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Thursday. He made the statement while inaugurating ₹600 crore worth three grid substations and eight transmission lines in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Addressing a public meeting at Baliana, Majhi said the new power facilities will benefit about 22 lakh consumers in the twin cities. The CM noted that residents had frequently complained in the past about unscheduled outages. After the BJP government assumed office, the issue was taken seriously, and officials were directed last year to ensure that no unannounced cuts occur. The state largely avoided such outages last year, he added.

"Any unannounced power cut, especially in summer, without prior notice, will be treated as a punishable offence. Officials or employees found responsible will face strict action, including imprisonment,



and no leniency will be shown in such cases," he said.

Majhi inaugurated the new grid substations at Baliana, Satyanagar, and SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, in the presence of Deputy CM KV Singh Deo, who is also in charge of the Energy department, and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi.

The CM said ₹300 crore has been sanctioned for the restoration of the Prachi river, while ₹75 crore has been approved for the second phase of the Dhanua river restoration in the Bhubaneswar-Jayadev area.

Additionally, ₹170 crore has been approved for the restoration of the Daya river and ₹400 crore for the restoration and improvement of the Daya West Canal. He announced that all the work will start soon.

## World's oldest octopus isn't an octopus after all

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, April 9:** A 300-million-year-old tentacled sea creature has lost its crown as the world's oldest octopus, after scientists found evidence that it's not an octopus at all.

Newly published research concludes that fossilized remains listed by Guinness World Records as the earliest known octopus belong instead to a relative of a nautilus, a cephalopod with both tentacles and a shell.

University of Reading zoologist Thomas Clements, the lead researcher behind the new findings, said the fossil, Pohlsepia

mazonensis, has long been the subject of scientific debate.

"It's a very difficult fossil to interpret," he said. "To look at it, it kind of just looks like a white mush. If you look at it and you are a cephalopod researcher and you're interested in everything octopus, it does superficially look a lot like a deep-water octopus."

The creature, a blob about the size of a human hand, was found in the Mazon Creek area of Illinois, about 50 miles southwest of Chicago, that is rich in fossils from a period before dinosaurs walked the Earth.

Its identification by palaeon-



tologists as an octopus in 2000 upended ideas about the evolution of the eight-tentacled cephalopods, suggesting they emerged much earlier than previously thought. The next oldest-known octopus fossil is

only about 90 million years old. "It's a huge gap," Clements said. "And so that big gap got researchers sort of questioning, 'Is this thing actually an octopus?'"

To solve the mystery of the

"weird blob", Clements and his team used a synchrotron - which uses fast-moving electrons to create beams of light brighter than the sun - to look inside the fossil rock. They found a ribbon of teeth known as a radula that is common to all mollusks, including nautilus and octopuses. Each row had 11 teeth. Octopuses have either seven or nine.

"This has too many teeth, so it can't be an octopus," Clements said. "And that's how we realize that the world's oldest octopus is actually a fossil nautilus, not an octopus."

The teeth matched those of a

fossil nautiloid called Paleocadmus pohlhi that had been found in the same area. Clements said the mistaken identification may have happened because the creature decomposed and lost its telltale shell before it was fossilized, complicating identification. As a result of the findings published this week in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, Guinness World Records said it will no longer list Pohlsepia mazonensis as the earliest known octopus.

Pohlsepia mazonensis is named for its discoverer James Pohl, and is in the collection of the Field Museum in Chicago.

## TRAINEE AGNIVEER FOUND HANGING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** A 19-year-old trainee Agniveer from UP allegedly died by suicide on the INS Chilka campus in Khurda, police said Thursday.

The deceased, Kartik Yadav, a native of UP's Meerut, was found hanging from a ceiling fan inside a room on the campus Wednesday, a police officer said. Staffers brought him down and took him to a medical facility on the campus, where he was declared dead, he said.

"We have registered an unnatural death case. The body was handed over to his family after postmortem," he said.

# leisure



## STEVEN SPIELBERG WANTS TO DIRECT A PURE HORROR FILM

Legendary filmmaker Steven Spielberg has revealed he hopes to direct a pure horror film in the future. Though he delivered thrilling moments in classics like *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Spielberg says he has yet to fully explore the horror genre

## SEYFRIED TO VOICE CINDERELLA IN STEPS

Hollywood star Amanda Seyfried has been roped in to voice the character of Cinderella for Netflix's original animated film *Steps*. The film is an animated reimagining of the Cinderella story, focusing on her stepsisters, and is scheduled for release in 2026



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
 There are chances that there will be some disappointing moments today, foretells Ganesha. Your own recklessness may well be the cause. Ganesha says it's good to take inspiration from seniors once in a while.

**TAURUS**  
 Love will come knocking at your door today, predicts Ganesha. Your wits are likely to remain very lively in the afternoon. A romantic mood will ignite your evening, as you please yourself by showering attention on near and dear ones, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
 There are chances that your love life will go through some ups and downs today, warns Ganesha. Care and concern must be the watchwords in the afternoon. You will probably take chances in money matters. Don't lose your head, keep the faith and get back to your charming self.

**CANCER**  
 You will be extremely eager and enthusiastic today, portends Ganesha. At work, your emotions will prevail over your common sense. Things, however, will change for the better as the day progresses. Loved ones will shower care and concern at night.

**LEO**  
 Building Rome was not an easy task; neither was the Pyramid built just like that. It takes sheer grit and determination, and lots of hard work, to make monumental changes. You may have to do the same and work awfully hard to establish yourself today, says Ganesha. Don't be disappointed if you do not get the results that you desire straight away.

**VIRGO**  
 Your love life will hit choppy waters today, warns Ganesha. Care and concern are important in all matters, especially in the afternoon. Hedge a bet in matters of money. But keep your head high and flip back to your own charismatic self, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
 The Darwinian legacy of the 'supremacy game' takes on a new turn for you today, Ganesha expects you to find a progressive and lenient side to yourself later in the day. This will enable you to achieve phenomenal career growth, and make you virtually indispensable in office. 'Go get them tiger!' says Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**  
 Passionate love affairs will be even more intense and seductive than before, predicts Ganesha. Evening may see a new romantic aura around you. Professionally, you shall answer all the riddles that have left you in a lurch till now. Ganesha predicts marriage proposals homing in on many of you.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Blood will be thicker than water today. And your relatives - near and distant - will bring much pleasure today. But Ganesha portends you being at loggerheads with your colleagues. However, progress will not elude you today.

**CAPRICORN**  
 If you had scheduled the launch of a new product today, tarry a while, says Ganesha. It will be in your benefit to delay the launch till late in the day. But if you are headstrong on following the plan, be prepared to face disappointments because the response may not be as satisfying as you may have envisaged.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Your ambition makes you overbearing, and foot-in-mouth will be a common phenomenon today. If you're too forceful or insistent, you may be tormented by regret tomorrow. Avoid being coerced into taking drastic decisions, cautions Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
 While no major troubles ought to crop up to disturb your peace of mind, you will still find yourself dealing with a few minor irritants at the workplace today. Delay the start of long-term projects for a more opportune time. The evening should probably see you socialising and relaxing with good food, wine and music, says Ganesha.

## Sara to play Madhubala

**Mumbai:** Actor Sara Arjun is reportedly set to take on one of the most significant roles of her career. According to reports, she has been cast to portray legendary screen icon Madhubala in an upcoming film directed by Jasmeet K Reen and produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The project is currently in pre-production and is expected to go on floors later this year.

A report suggests that the film will revisit the golden era of Hindi cinema while tracing Madhubala's re-rise to the struggles and glamour behind her reported development as a grand tribute to one of the industry's most enduring stars.

As part of her preparation, Sara is expected to undergo extensive physical and performance training to capture Madhubala's elegance and screen charm. This will reportedly include detailed costume design, dialect training, and multiple look tests to ally recreate the era. Director Jasmeet K Reen, who has previously received praise for his work on *Darlings*, is said to be the film as an intense biographical drama. Madhubala, among the highest-paid actors of the 1950s, appeared in more than 70 films during her career and to remain a timeless icon of Indian cinema.

Sara has not yet commented on the reports.



## Tamannaah eyes exciting future

**Mumbai:** Actor Tamannaah Bhatia recently reflected on the evolving opportunities for female actors in the film industry, expressing excitement about the projects lined up in her career. In a recent interview, the actor shared that despite completing more than two decades in the industry, she still feels a sense of new beginnings. "I'm really excited for all my features to come out one by one. It's very interesting, not many actors and maybe more so female actors get this sort of an opportunity. It has been like 21 years into my career, and I still feel like I'm starting off all over again," she said.

Tamannaah also spoke about the immense acceptance she has received from audiences, especially in the southern film industry. She noted that the warmth she experienced there played a major role in shaping her journey. According to the actor, the growing appreciation from audiences across other parts of India now feels both exciting and humbling, motivating her to continue delivering meaningful work.

Tamannaah was in New Delhi Wednesday for the launch of 'Oristar', a new brand by Jayanta Lighting Innovation, where she serves as the brand ambassador. On the work front, she will next appear in the film *Vvan*, directed by Deepak Mishra and Arunabh Kumar, and produced by Ekta Kapoor. The film, co-starring Sidharth Malhotra, is scheduled to release August 28.

## Alaya pushes limit

**Mumbai:** Actress Alaya F loves to stay on top of her fitness game. Through her latest social media post, the *Jawaani Jaaneman* actress shared that she took 150 attempts to get a pose she saw on Instagram right.

Posting a clip of herself attempting the post, Alaya revealed that the exercise left her with peeled elbows and nausea.

"Here's a short glimpse of some of the 150+ attempts, peeled elbows and no stop nausea it took me to successfully do a pose I saw on Instagram

(sic)", she captioned the post. The *Freddy* actress further stressed that she is not encouraging anyone to push their physical limit beyond the necessary point.

Alaya said that it is always crucial to listen to one's body.

"PS: this is not me advocating for pushing your body even when it feels completely done. It's always super important to listen to your body because everyone is different! so please be rest assured, I know how much to push myself and when to stop but out of all the things my teachers call me, 'stubborn' is my favourite. Thank you for always making sure than my stubbornness is never at the cost of my safety haha @sunpreet\_sing", she went on to write.



## Vikrant on fatherhood challenges

**Mumbai:** Actor Vikrant Massey has shared a heartfelt perspective on fatherhood, speaking openly about the emotional challenges many fathers experience but rarely express. The National Award-winning actor, who recently became a father, reflected on the idea of "dad guilt" and the internal conflict men often face while balancing work and family life.

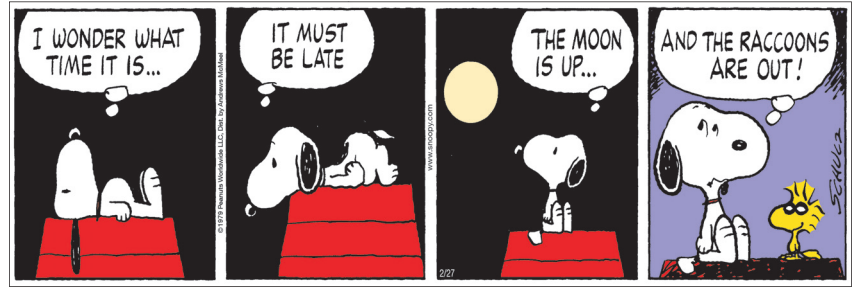
In an industry that frequently associates masculinity with emotional restraint, Massey's candid remarks offer a refreshing shift. He explained that while mothers often shoulder a greater share of parenting responsibilities, fathers too struggle with the emotional pull of being away from their children due to professional commitments.

According to him, societal conditioning has long defined men as providers and protectors, encouraging them to prioritise work over openly expressing their feelings. Massey admitted that he has often experienced this conflict himself while travelling for work. He recalled that watch videos of his child or make frequent video calls just to catch a glimpse of the baby, even if the child was peacefully asleep.

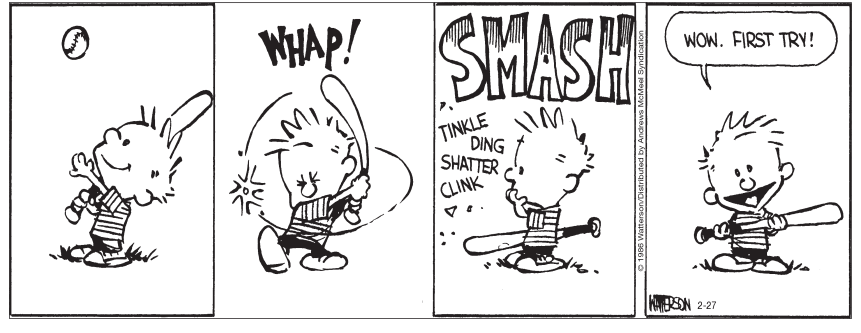
Highlighting the pressure men feel to appear strong, the actor emphasised that vulnerability should not be seen as weakness. He encouraged fathers to acknowledge their emotions, saying it is perfectly normal to miss home, revisit cherished moments, and even shed a tear.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

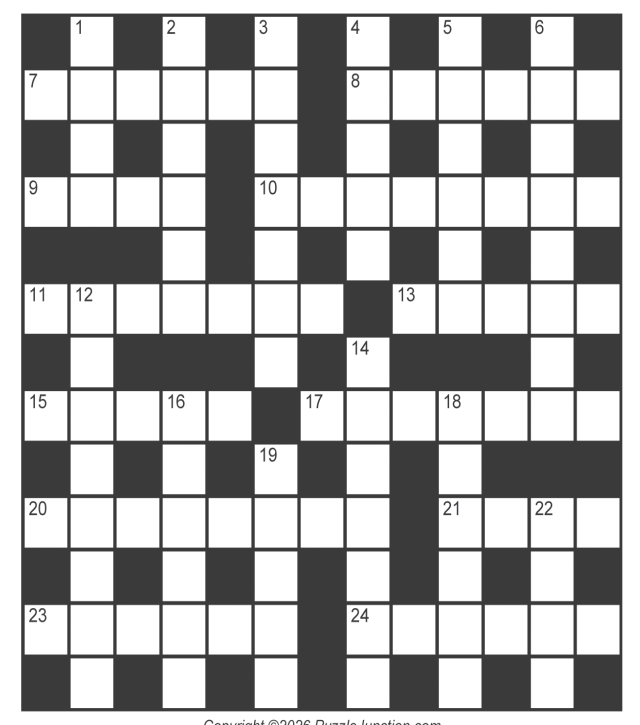


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 European flatfish
  - 8 Ghost
  - 9 Garage occupant
  - 10 Just out (5-3)
  - 11 Whine
  - 13 Skips
  - 15 Eskimo boat
  - 17 War paint
  - 20 Self-important
  - 21 Crushing blow
  - 23 Kings and queens, e.g.
  - 24 Do a slow burn
- Down**
- 1 Know-it-all
  - 2 Flowering
  - 3 Farm buildings
  - 4 Op-ed piece
  - 5 Sagacity
  - 6 Kind of hotel (4-4)
  - 12 Comical
  - 14 Fiction genre
  - 16 Homes
  - 18 Bier
  - 19 Pool shot
  - 22 Stomach woe

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   | 5 |   | 4 | 1 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |   |   |
|   | 4 |   |   | 2 |   |   | 9 |   |
| 7 | 2 |   |   | 4 |   |   |   |   |
|   | 3 | 6 |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |
| 4 |   |   | 7 | 6 | 1 |   |   | 9 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 5 |
|   | 7 |   |   | 8 | 4 | 1 |   |   |
|   | 5 | 3 |   | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | W | A | Y | S | T | R | E | S | S | E | D |
| U | U | C | I | A | H | E |   |   |   |   |   |
| T | E | R | R | A | I | N | S | L | I | D | E |
| O | A | L | L | E | N | D |   |   |   |   |   |
| P | O | S | S | I | B | L | E | O | D | D | S |
| S | B | I | B | I |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Y | A | K | R | A | N | G | E | G | A | B |   |
| R | E | G | O | N | J |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | T | Y | X | C | O | N | J |   |   |   |   |
| T | P | S |   | T | I | E | E |   |   |   |   |
| O | P | T | I | C | T | A | N | K | A | R | D |
| R | O | O | O | G | C | O |   |   |   |   |   |
| M | O | N | S | T | E | R | S | A | H | E | M |

**SUDOKU**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 3 |
| 2 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| 9 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
| 3 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| 1 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 7 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## Self-defence training for 5K SHG women

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Thursday launched a self-defence training programme for 5,000 women self-help group (SHG) members here in the presence of National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar.

The programme implemented by Mission Shakti department in partnership with NCW aims to provide self-defence and personal safety training to SHG women.

Addressing the gathering, Parida said empowering women is not only limited to financial independence, but it also ensures their safety, dignity and confidence.

"This self-defence training programme will equip our SHG women with the

strength and skills to move fearlessly, take independent decisions and actively participate in economic activities," she said.

Emphasising on the importance of institutional support for women's safety and capacity building, the NCW chairperson said that the programme will play a crucial role in enabling women to become self-reliant and confident, while contributing meaningfully to society and the economy.

In the pilot phase, the self-defence training programme will cover 5,000 members across five districts - Khurda, Cuttack, Puri, Keonjhar and Ganjam, officials said.

The initiative aims to enhance women's mobility, ensure safer participation in market linkages, and strengthen the foundation of women-led development in the state, they said.



**SPLASH:** Vehicles wade through a waterlogged street in Bhubaneswar after a heavy downpour lashed the Capital City, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## Exclusion from temple may divide society: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** Everybody must have access to all temples and 'maths' and excluding a denomination will negatively affect Hinduism and divide the society, the Supreme Court Thursday said.

The remark by a nine-judge bench Constitution bench came while hearing petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of religious freedom practised by multiple faiths.

The bench comprises Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices BV Nagarathna, MM Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan, and Joydeepa Bagchi.

Senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan, appearing for organisations including the Nair Service Society, Ayyappa Seva Samajam,



**If you say the right of entry, in the context of Venkataramana Devaru, where they said anybody other than Gowda Saraswat Brahmin is excluded, it will affect negatively Hinduism**

JUSTICE BV NAGARATHNA

and Kshetra Samrakshana Samiti, submitted that a denominational temple can give permissive rights and have worship or confine it only to the denomination.

At this juncture, Justice Nagarathna remarked, "There is one apprehension. If you say the right of entry, in the context of Venkataramana Devaru, where they said anybody other than Gowda Saraswat Brahmin is excluded, it will affect negatively Hinduism." She added, "Everybody must have access to every temple and 'math'.

Keep aside the controversy in Sabarimala judgement. But if you say it is a practice and it is a matter of

religion that I will exclude others and only my section, my denomination will attend temple and nobody else. That is not good for Hinduism. Let the religion not be adversely affected. It will be counterproductive for the denomination."

Concurring, Justice Kumar said such exclusion will divide the society.

Vaidyanathan submitted that if temples serve only their denomination, they cannot seek funds either from the state or private donors or from the public because they are not dependent on them. If a law is to be made, it has to pass the test of public order, morality or health, he asserted.

In Devaru judgement, the top court had upheld the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, affirming that while the temple remains open to all Hindus, certain ceremonial practices reserved for the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are constitutionally permissible.

The nine-judge bench has framed seven questions on the scope of religious freedom.

In September 2018, a five-judge Constitution bench, by a 4:1 majority verdict, lifted a ban that prevented women aged between 10 and 50 from entering the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple in Kerala, and held that the centuries-old Hindu religious practice was illegal and unconstitutional.

Later, November 14, 2019, another five-judge bench headed by former CJI Ranjan Gogoi, by a majority of 3:2, referred the issue of discrimination against women at various places of worship to a larger bench.

## Vig nets addl chief engineer in DA case

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** After series of searches conducted on various properties of Rajesh Chandra Mohanty, Additional Chief Engineer, Central Irrigation Circle, Odisha and Additional Charge of Chief Engineer (Dam Safety), Vigilance sleuths Thursday arrested him in disproportionate asset (DA) case.

His assets were reportedly 241 per cent higher than his known sources of income, said the anti-corruption wing officials, adding Mohanty was forwarded to the Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Cuttack.

According to Vigilance officials, house searches conducted April 9 led to the detection of multiple movable and immovable assets worth crores in the name of Mohanty and his family members.

The seized assets include a palatial triple-storeyed building measuring around 3,000 sq ft at Baramunda Housing Board Colony in Bhubaneswar. A farmhouse with a double-storeyed building of approximately 4,000 sq ft spread over 1.71 acres was also traced at Bimbol under Bhapur in Dhenkanal district.

## High turnout marks first phase polling

AGENCIES

**Thiruvanthapuram/ Guwahati/Puducherry, April 9:** Polling in Thursday's Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry saw a robust turnout under largely peaceful conditions amidst heavy deployment of security forces, as only isolated incidents of law and order reports came in.

The Union Territory of Puducherry recorded the highest turnout at 89.08 per cent, followed by Assam at 85.04 per cent, and Kerala at 77.38 per cent, according to updates available around 7pm, though the final figures were not updated by the Election Commission.

Byelections were also held in Karnataka's Bagalkot and Davanagere South, Nagaland's Koridang, and Tripura's Dharmanagar.

The numbers have already surpassed the electoral turnout of 2021, when Puducherry recorded 83.42 per cent, Assam 82.42 per cent, and Kerala around 76 per cent. Incidentally, the turnout dropped marginally in 2021 compared to 2016.

The turnout built steadily through the day Thursday,



|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| Puducherry         | 89.08% |
| Assam              | 85.04% |
| Kerala             | 77.38% |
| (Reports till 7pm) |        |

after moderate morning participation. Long queues were seen across the states in several booths, even as specially-abled persons joined in exercising their voting rights.

Among other places, a newly married couple came to vote at the HMT School polling station at Kalamasserri in Kerala's Ernakulam.

Meanwhile, an unusual visual has gone viral where a robot was seen welcoming voters at the VOC Government School Higher Secondary School in Puducherry's Raj Bhavan constituency. The white robot is seen moving along a corridor, carrying a tray full of petals, greeting people, and encouraging them to exercise their franchise.

## Dy CM conducts raid at govt office

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Following allegations of corruption and misconduct, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Thursday conducted a surprise inspection at the Engineer-in-Chief (EIC) office of the Energy department at Maitree Vihar here, accompanied by a Vigilance team.

According to sources, the raid was a result of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Gokulananda Mallik's information to the Deputy Chief Minister about alleged corruption at the EIC office, prompting the surprise visit.

As per reports, no employees were present at the office when Singh Deo reached. Upon inquiring about their absence, a staffer said they had all gone for lunch.



Singh Deo further pointed that an outsourcing employee had been entrusted with handling all official government work.

"I received a complaint from Minister Mallik about irregularities in this office. Simanchal Sarab, a section officer who has been working here since 2009, allegedly appointed an outsourcing employee, identified as Panchanan Swain, to handle official government work, which is not as per provisions. Officers have also stated that Swain carries out work for those who pay him," said Singh Deo.

Following the inspection, the Deputy CM instructed to take immediate action against the officers involved and address the ongoing irregularities.

## Artemis II astronauts prepare for 'fireball' re-entry

**THE CREW, FLYING IN THEIR ORION CAPSULE SINCE LAUNCHING FROM FLORIDA LAST WEEK, ARE DUE TO SPLASH DOWN OFF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST FRIDAY EVENING**

REUTERS

**Houston, April 9:** Four astronauts travelling back to earth from the far side of the moon on NASA's Artemis II mission spoke of their emotions as they wrapped up the unprecedented flight and prepared to re-enter the atmosphere in a "fireball", during their first press conference from space Wednesday.

The Artemis II crew, flying in their Orion capsule since launching from Flor-

heatshield to the test as it gets battered by intense atmospheric friction.

"I've actually been thinking about entry since April 3, 2023 when we got assigned to this mission," said Artemis II mission pilot Victor Glover, when asked how he was feeling about the return.

"There's so many more pictures, so many more stories, and gosh, I haven't even begun to process what we've been through. We've still got two more days, and riding a fireball through the atmosphere is profound as well."

Glover and fellow NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch, and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen are the first wave of astronauts in a



multibillion-dollar series of missions under the Artemis program that aims to return humans to the moon's surface by 2028 before China, and establish a long-term US presence over the next decade, building a moon base for potential future missions to Mars.

Artemis IV, targeted for 2028, would be the pro-

gramme's first crewed lunar landing, and the first since Apollo 17 in 1972.

Back on earth, dozens of lunar scientists have been packed in rooms adjacent to NASA's Mission Control Center in Houston this week, scribbling down notes and debating a steady stream of both real-time and recorded audio from

the Artemis II astronaut crew in their Orion spacecraft.

The crew is due to return to Earth Friday around 8 pm ET Saturday 6:30 am IST), splashing down off the coast of San Diego, California to cap their nearly 10-day mission.

The four astronauts Monday had reached a record-breaking distance from Earth of roughly 252,000 miles, surpassing by some 4,000 miles the previous record held by the Apollo 13 crew for 56 years.

Wiseman, Artemis II mission commander, told reporters the crew each had two "very brief" chats with their families during the mission.

"Hearing your crew mates giggling and cry-

ing, and just gasping and listening and loving their families from afar - family is so important to all four of us, and that has been amazing," he said.

The astronauts broke their distance record during the lunar flyby in which they surveyed the moon's surface from roughly 4,000 miles above.

Advances in lunar science have typically relied on lunar-orbiting satellites and Earth-based observations. But the crew's six-hour lunar flyby provided a real-time stream of scientific collections from human eyes, allowing rare back-and-forth discussions between teams on the ground and their fellow scientists over 252,000 miles away in deep space.

# NIA begins probe into Bhubaneswar blast



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has begun its probe into a blast in Bhubaneswar in January that left two persons dead, officials said Thursday.

A three-member NIA team visited the Airfield police station here and collected documents, including FIRs and forensic reports, in connection with the blast that took place in Azad Nagar January 27, a senior police officer said.

Investigators had visited the blast site in January, and examined forensic evidence and CCTV footage as part of a preliminary inquiry, he said. "As per the legal procedure, the case is being handed over

« A three-member National Investigation Agency team visited Airfield police station and collected key documents, including FIRs and forensic reports, related to the January 27 Azad Nagar blast

« The agency will probe possible links to larger criminal networks and examine whether high-grade explosives like RDX were used

« Earlier, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police said four persons were injured when prime suspect Shahnawaz Malik (26), a history-sheeter, was allegedly assembling an explosive device on a rented house rooftop

to the NIA. Whatever documents they will ask for, we will provide to them," ACP (Zone 2), Bhubaneswar, Krushna Chandra Palei, told reporters here.

The Central agency had written to Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh Monday, seeking transfer of the case for a detailed probe into a possible terror angle behind the explosion, officials said.

The NIA intends to examine possible links to larger criminal networks and ascertain whether high-grade explosives such as RDX were used in the blast, they said.

The Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police had earlier said four persons were injured when prime suspect Shahnawaz Malik (26), a his-

tory-sheeter, was allegedly assembling an explosive device on the rooftop of a rented house.

Malik and a woman identified as Lizatun Bibi later succumbed to burn injuries, while two others survived, police said.

"Though it is suspected that Malik may have used some high-grade explosive material, it is yet to be confirmed whether that was RDX," the officer added.



**BEATS FOR SALE:** A street vendor from Pune displays musical instruments on a roadside near Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



**BOLLARD BREACH:** Vehicle drivers in Bhubaneswar are seen flouting traffic norms by manoeuvring through recently installed bollards, Thursday



**FEST AHEAD:** Darji sebayats prepare 'Divan' ahead of Lord Jagannath's Chandan Yatra in Puri, Thursday

**WATER RESOURCES DEPT**

## Sarma reviews irrigation projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** In a bid to strengthen irrigation infrastructure and ensure steady water supply to farmers, Water Resources department Principal Secretary Shubha Sarma, along with Engineer-in-Chief Sagar Mohanty, Thursday conducted field visits across multiple districts to review ongoing projects.

During the visit, Sarma inspected the Padmanabhpur Check Dam and held detailed discussions on renovation costs and irrigation capacity. Emphasising timely execution, she directed officials to set monthly targets to achieve 90 per cent expenditure by the end of the 2026-27 financial year.



Interacting with local farmers, she stressed forming Pani Panchayats and registering Water Users' Associations for effective water management. She also directed officials to undertake turfing of the afflux bund and maintain upstream slopes to enhance the safety of the check dam.

Later, while reviewing the Hadua Irrigation Project, Sarma instructed officials to complete the concrete gravity dam and spillway within the stipulated timeline. She also proposed setting up a SCADA control room, along with beautification measures and a children's park to promote tourism in the project area.

The review was attended by local MLA Bijaya Kumar Dalabehera, Athagarh Sub-Collector Prahlad Narayan Sharma, and other senior departmental officials.

Meanwhile, Mohanty visited several projects in Patnagarh block of Bolangir district. He inspected the Subarnarekha Minor Irrigation Project and Upper Lanth Irrigation Project, reviewing their progress.

Mohanty directed field officials to expedite land acquisition processes and immediately close gaps in river embankments to complete the works without delay. He also inspected the Berhampura low-height bridge constructed over the Mayabati river. To improve water storage for irrigation and drinking purposes, he instructed officials to install shutters at the bridge vents.

## BJD MP urges CM to revive metro project on Jaipur model

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sasmit Patra Thursday urged Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahi to revive proposed Metro Rail Project on the line of the Jaipur Metro funding model.

In a letter to CM, the BJD MP said, "I request the Odisha government through you to reconsider the decision to scrap the Odisha Metro project, and Odisha should adopt the Jaipur funding model in consultation with the Government of India."

The BJD MP's letter comes five days after the state Cabinet approved a proposal to put on hold the Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Project in view of its poor feasibility.

"April 8, 2026, the Union Cabinet approved Jaipur Metro Phase-2 (41km over ₹13,000 crore) under the Metro Rail Policy, 2017. It will be implemented through a SPV (special purpose vehicle) on a 50:50 sharing by the Centre and the state and supported by subordinate debt and external financing," Patra stated in the letter.

He said that the Jaipur model sets a clear precedent that large



metro projects are being implemented through a structured Centre-state partnership.

"The Odisha Metro (Bhubaneswar-Cuttack-Khurda-Puri), with an approved cost of only ₹6,255 crore in 2024, is less than half the scale of Jaipur and was originally conceived as a 100 per cent state-funded project," he said.

Patra noted that under the Jaipur model, the project would require only ₹3,100 crore each for the Centre and the state.

"If the Jaipur Metro of more than ₹13,000 crore supported by the Union government is viable, I am sure Odisha Metro (Puri-Khurda-Bhubaneswar-Cuttack) with half the cost of Jaipur Metro, would find viability and policy-align-

ment," he argued.

Patra had earlier, April 6, written a letter to Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal and sought his intervention to save the Bhubaneswar Metro rail project.

He said discontinuing the Bhubaneswar Metro Rail project would undermine a critical mobility and economic backbone for the state.

The proposed Odisha Metro along the Puri-Khurda-Bhubaneswar-Cuttack corridor would benefit the people of state with safer, faster travel, students and youth with better access to education and jobs, and senior citizens with more comfortable transport, he said.

The project would also boost tourism by improving connectivity to key destinations, support small businesses, and drive economic development by reducing congestion and creating new opportunities, he said.

Odisha's Works Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said that the state government has not scrapped the Bhubaneswar Metro Rail project, but is seeking an alternative model to implement it.

## 2 held with 21 grams of brown sugar in City

POST NEWS NETWORK



**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Two youths were arrested by Tamando police for allegedly possessing and selling 21 grams of brown sugar near Tamando Melana Padia in the City, police said Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Deepak Nayak alias Bapi (26) and Rakesh Nayak alias Sanu (24), both residents of Haraparabati Sahi near Kalinga Studio under Bharatpur police limits.

According to police information, acting on a reliable tip-off, a special team led by the Inspector-in-Charge of Tamando police station conducted a surprise raid near Melana Padia in front of Balinkeswar Temple Wednesday night. During

the operation, the team apprehended the two accused for allegedly trafficking and selling brown sugar.

During the search, police recovered 11 grams of brown sugar from Deepak and 10 grams from Rakesh, totalling 21 grams of contraband. An auto-rickshaw used in the illegal trade was also seized from their possession.

During interrogation, both accused reportedly confessed to being involved in the brown sugar trade for the past two years. A case has been registered at Tamando police station under relevant sections of the NDPS Act. The accused were arrested and forwarded to court.

Further investigation into the case is underway, police added.

## OPCC condemns Sijimali clash, forms probe team

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) has strongly condemned the alleged police repression at Sijimali and announced formation of a team to investigate the incident.

Tensions escalated in Sijimali, Rayagada April 7 when a group of tribal villagers, reportedly confronted police personnel who had arrived to execute non-bailable warrants against certain accused individuals.

The situation quickly turned violent, with villagers allegedly pelting stones and engaging in a fierce clash with the police. The confrontation left at least 58 police personnel injured, along with several villagers.

OPCC President Bhakta Charan Das has constituted an inquiry team comprising senior party leaders. The team will be led by Koraput MP and All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge for the North-Eastern region, Saptagiri Ulaka.

Former Minister Suresh Rautray has been appointed as co-chairperson. Other members include senior legislators Taraprasad Bahinipati, Satyajit Gamang, Pabitra Sautra, and Mangu Khilla.

## ECoR expands solar CCTV network

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The East Coast Railway (ECoR) is undertaking a major expansion to scale up its solar-powered CCTV network across all divisions, aiming to rapidly transform railway security through a technology driven and eco-friendly surveillance initiative.

ECoR has already commissioned 166 solar-powered CCTV cameras across its divisions—Waltair (113), Sambalpur (47) and Khurda Road (6). The cameras have been strategically installed at high-risk and high-traffic locations, including station premises, marshalling yards, level crossings and isolated track sections.

Designed to function independently of conventional power sources, the solar systems ensure round-the-clock, uninterrupted monitoring, especially in remote and power deficient areas.

By June 2026, more than 2,500 solar powered CCTV cameras are targeted to be installed across ECoR jurisdiction.

This large scale rollout will significantly widen surveillance coverage, ensuring near complete monitoring of vulner-



able railway assets and passenger areas, and marking one of the most extensive security upgrades within Indian Railways.

The deployment of solar CCTV cameras has led to a measurable decline in criminal and unsafe activities across monitored sections.

Incidents of stone pelting on trains, cable theft, trespassing, and track sabotage attempts have reduced notably in areas under surveillance. The visible presence of cameras has acted as a strong deterrent, discouraging anti-social elements from engaging in such activities.

In addition, recorded footage

response, helping railway officials act promptly during untoward incidents.

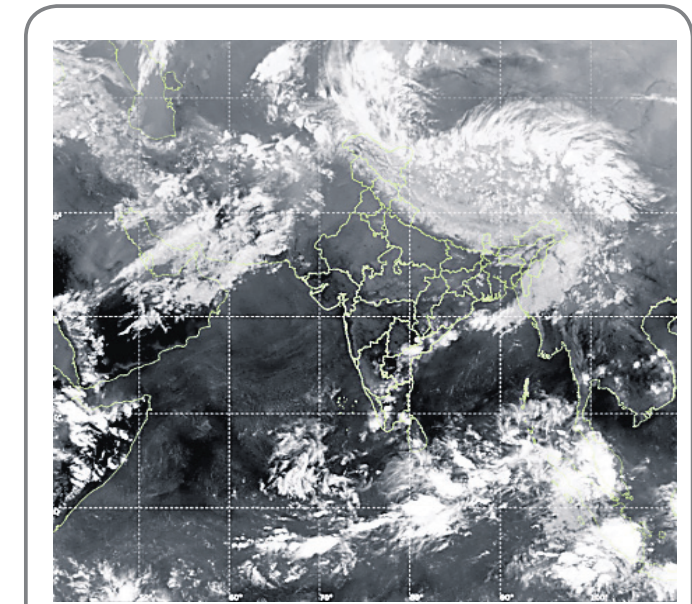
This enhanced surveillance environment provides greater reassurance to passengers, particularly women and those travelling during late hours.

To complement ground-based monitoring, ECoR has deployed 10 drones for aerial surveillance in inaccessible and sensitive areas, including dense forests and remote track sections.

The drone fleet is set to expand to 15 by the end of 2026, creating a multi layered, integrated surveillance system that minimises blind spots and strengthens overall security coverage.

The entire CCTV network operates on solar energy, ensuring zero reliance on conventional electricity and supporting environmental sustainability. This initiative aligns with the Central government's vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047', promoting green infrastructure development. Additionally, the system is highly economical, with minimal operational costs, no electricity expenditure, and low maintenance making it both sustainable and financially efficient.

| MARKET WATCH |               |         |                   |             |                  |
|--------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|
| CURRENCY     |               | BOURSES |                   | COMMODITIES |                  |
| INDEX        | VARIATION     | INDEX   | VARIATION         | INDEX       | VARIATION        |
| DOLLAR       | 93.19 ▲ 0.18  | SENSEX  | 76631.65 ▼ 931.25 | GOLD        | ₹153,094 ▲ ₹1318 |
| EURO         | 108.95 ▼ 0.03 | NIFTY   | 23775.10 ▼ 222.25 | SILVER      | ₹240,849 ▲ ₹931  |



| WEATHER  |        |       |   |
|----------|--------|-------|---|
|          | BBSR   | CTC   | FORECAST  |
| Max Temp | 34.8°  | 34.4° | Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur |
| Min Temp | 22.8°  | 21.4° |   |
| Humidity | 78%    | 88%   |   |
| Rainfall | 11.2mm | 1.8mm |   |

# Issueless woman kills niece out of jealousy; arrested



PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, April 9:** Police Thursday arrested a woman for allegedly killing her nine-year-old niece in Ganjam district, officials said.

The incident took place at Laxmanapalli near Chhamunda village under Jagannath-prasad police station limits of the district Wednesday.

The victim's mother alleged that after committing the murder, the woman wrapped the body in a plastic sheet and dumped it in an abandoned toilet located in the backside of her home.

The police recovered the body Wednesday late evening and said the preliminary investigation has revealed that the woman killed the nine-year-old girl out of jealousy, as she has no children, even after three years of marriage.

The accused was identified as Bidyabharati (26), wife of Ganesh Moharana, a resident of Laxmanapalli, the police said.

According to the police, the deceased, a resident of Kanakuturu village near Buguda in Ganjam district, was staying in Bhubaneswar along with her mother and a sister for the last

several years. The woman and her two daughters came to her brother's home Wednesday for a medical check-up. The woman, along with her brother, went to her residence at Kanakuturu for some medical issues, a police officer said.

After returning home, they did not find her daughter even though they searched for her intensively and informed the police. During the search, police found the body from the abandoned latrine.

After taking their food, the two sisters went to play with their friends near the house at about 10.30am. The deceased again came home at about 1.30pm and asked her aunt (the accused) for food. Since the accused was angry and jealous of the girl's mother, she throttled the girl with a cloth when no one was home, Ganjam SP Suvendu Patra said.

During the interrogation, the accused woman confessed to the crime. She was also angry with her husband reportedly for not taking her for a medical checkup for her pregnancy issue, whereas he took his sister (deceased's mother) to the doctor, said Bhanjanagar SDPO Deepak Kumar Mishra.

## ARSON AT CHURCH

# Accused held for raping visually impaired minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar/Anandapur/Hatadihi, April 9:** Days after a church was ransacked by agitators over a visually impaired girl being found pregnant, police have arrested a 28-year-old youth in connection with the alleged rape of the minor victim in Anandapur area of Keonjhar district.

The accused, identified as Balam Ho alias Kabu, belongs to a minority community. He was arrested by a special police team in another state after fleeing the area several months ago.



Anandapur Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Kamal Kumar Panda said that the accused committed the crime

around four months ago. The victim was allegedly assaulted when she had gone to bathe in a nearby stream. Threatened and fearing retaliation, the girl did not immediately inform her family.

The matter came to light recently after the girl fell ill and was taken to Anandapur hospital, where doctors confirmed she was pregnant. Following the revelation, local residents staged a protest Monday, demanding justice for the victim and immediate arrest of the suspect. The unrest resulted in property damage and arson at a place of worship of a minority

community. Superintendent of Police Nitin Kushalkar Dagudu and SDPO Panda deployed police forces from multiple stations including Nandipada, Soso, Ghasipura, and Ramachandrapur to restore order in the village.

The suspect had reportedly been hiding in Tamil Nadu to evade capture. He was tracked down following a coordinated effort by a special team formed under the SP's direction.

A case (96/2026) was registered at Anandapur police station in this connection and further investigations are on.

## Man drowns at Raniduduma fall



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nandapur, April 9:** A 32-year-old man drowned at Raniduduma waterfall in Koraput district Thursday while visiting the site with relatives and friends, police said.

The deceased was identified as Bhawani Shankar Mohanty, an accountant at Pratibha Nursing College in Koraput and a native of Jagatsinghpur district.

Sources said Mohanty had taken his brother-in-law Saan Kumar from Bhubaneswar, along with two college students, Nitya Sahu and Ritesh Nag, and a friend, Ismail Hantal, to visit the waterfall. The group travelled on two scooters.

While bathing at the base of the waterfall, Mohanty entered deep water and drowned. The others, who reportedly did not know how to swim, were unable to rescue him.

Police, fire services personnel and forest officials reached the spot and recovered the body. It has been kept at the Nandapur Community Health Centre morgue and authorities are awaiting the arrival of family members.

Police registered a case of unnatural death (8/26) based on a complaint filed by the brother-in-law. Meanwhile, locals have demanded stricter safety measures at waterfalls across the district to prevent such incidents.

# Ganja worth over ₹1 crore seized from Koraput forest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nandapur/Koraput, April 9:** Police seized 22 quintals and 19 kg of cannabis stored for trafficking in a forest near Devatiguda village under Hatibari panchayat of Nandapur police sub-division and Padua police limits in Koraput district, officials said Thursday.

The estimated value of the seized ganja is more than ₹1.10 crore, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Debendra Kumar Mallik informed in a presser held at Padua police station.

Acting on a tip-off, a Padua police team led by IIC Ashok



Kumar Bisoi and SI Surendra Sethi conducted a raid in the Devatiguda forest Wednesday night and recovered the contraband. The smugglers managed to escape after spotting the police, officials said.

During the operation, police found 180 ganja-filled polythene sacks concealed deep inside the dense forest. The seized contra-

band was brought to the police station and weighed in the presence of a magistrate. The total quantity was found to be 2,219 kg.

A case (40/2026) has been registered and the investigation has been entrusted to SI Deepak Barik, SDPO Mallik said. He also praised the Padua police team for the successful operation.

Police said efforts are underway to identify and nab those involved in the storage and trafficking of the contraband.

The drug haul comes days after police in the Nandapur subdivision seized hashish oil worth about ₹200 crore in a separate operation.

# Villagers oppose private firm's coal mining project

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Talcher, April 9:** Residents of Dharampur and Kankili panchayats in Angul district Thursday staged strong protests against a private company that has secured a tender for coal mining in the area.

Villagers asserted that they would not allow any private firm to acquire land under any circumstances. They also turned back vehicles that had arrived to conduct borewell surveys and drilling work. A delegation later met Talcher Sub-Collector Ashish Ranjan Sahu to lodge their protest.

Residents of Dharampur alleged that despite sustained opposition from locals, company officials were attempting to



create divisions among villagers and holding meetings with a small group to push ahead with the project.

Tension flared up when two borewell drilling vehicles of the company reached Dharampur with the support of a few persons Thursday, but locals resisted and forced them to leave, the villagers said.

At an earlier meeting held at the sub-collector's office, it was decided that drilling would not be carried out without the consent of residents from the two panchayats. Despite this, some persons allegedly joined hands with company officials and are now attempting to initiate drilling work in Dharampur area. Following complaints by

Dharampur panchayat residents to the sub-collector, a meeting was convened involving company representatives and selected villagers. After locals demanded that the meeting be held in the presence of all residents, it was conducted with participation of more than 500 men and women from three villages.

Presiding over the meeting, the sub-collector told company officials that drilling work cannot begin without the consent of the residents. The official advised the company to visit villages and hold discussions with locals.

Tehsildar Alfa Jena, SDPO Bharat Sahu and officials of the Rungta company were present at the meeting.

## Man critical in bear attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar/Anandapur/Hatadihi, April 9:** A man was critically injured after a bear attacked him and mauled his private parts in Keonjhar district Thursday.

The victim was identified as Prakash Barik of Kolimati village under Ghasipura police limits in Anandapur subdivision. The incident took place when Prakash had gone to graze his goats near a forest in the morning.

He was returning home around noon when a bear suddenly attacked him. The animal

mauled his private parts and inflicted injuries to his head with its claws. Hearing his screams, villagers rushed to the spot, prompting the bear to flee into the forest. Family members rescued the critically injured youth and admitted him to the Anandapur sub-divisional hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was later shifted to Cuttack for advanced treatment.

On being informed, Forest department personnel reached the spot and launched an investigation. Villagers have demanded immediate government assistance for the injured youth, a poor goat herder.

# Locals halt road work over quality concerns

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, April 9:** Tension flared in Hatigeda village under Bandhugaon block of Koraput district after local residents halted an ongoing road construction project, alleging poor quality work and lack of transparency in its execution.

The road, stretching nearly 7 km from Karli to Hatigeda, was expected to improve connectivity in the region. However, villagers claim the construction quality is sub-standard. Instead of proper groundwork and layering, workers have simply poured a thin layer of concrete over an existing kutcha road, they alleged.

A local resident alleged



that the promised two-inch concrete layer is not even one inch thick in several stretches questioning the quality and durability of the project.

Villagers also expressed serious concerns over the absence of supervision by officials. They claimed that neither the junior engineer nor the block development officer has visited the site for inspection. When confronted, the contractor reportedly stated that he was acting on

instructions from higher authorities, further deepening suspicions of irregularities.

Adding to the outrage is the absence of a project display board at the site, which is mandatory to provide details such as cost, specifications, and timeline. The village sarpanch highlighted that residents have not been informed about any official proposal or plan related to the project.

With anger mounting, villagers have warned of intensifying protests if corrective measures are not taken immediately. They have demanded a thorough inspection and greater transparency, even as allegations of negligence and possible corruption continue to surface.

# Bryde's whale carcass washes ashore at Gahirmatha

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kendrapara/Rajnagar, April 9:** The decomposed carcass of a 32-foot-long Bryde's whale was found Thursday morning at Madali mouth within the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, officials confirmed.

Ranger of the sanctuary, Kapilendra Pradhan, said the whale may have died over a week ago in deep waters, as the carcass was highly decomposed, showing visible scars and signs of past entanglements.

The Block Veterinary Officer of Rajnagar, along with

forest personnel, conducted a post-mortem at the site. Tissue and viscera samples were collected to be sent to the Zoological Survey of India at Gopalpur.

These samples will help determine the whale's species, gender, genetic diversity, population health, and pollution exposure.

"Only after the analysis report will we know the exact cause of death," said Vardaraj Gaonkar, DFO of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division.

However, forest officials suspect that the whale might have been struck by ships or fishing



vessels in deep waters before its carcass drifted ashore. Bryde's whales, also known

as tropical whales, are among the least understood baleen whale species. They prefer wa-

ters above 16°C and are found in both near-shore and open seas between latitudes 40° South and 40° North. Historically, they have often been mistaken for Sei whales, which are larger and inhabit temperate and sub-polar regions.

This is not the first instance of Bryde's whale carcasses washing ashore in the region. In late February, a 30-foot-long baleen whale was found at Sandhkuda beach along the Paradip coast. Similarly, a 25-foot Bryde's whale carcass was recovered in late January at the Devi river mouth inside Bhitarkanika National Park.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** No.34001/28/2627  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**BHANJANAGAR (R&B) DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR**  
(Phone/Fax: (06821) 241133 / E-mail: eernbbng@yahoo.in)  
Ltr. No.: 4004 Dtd.: 04.04.2026

**INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)**  
E-Procurement Bid Identification No. S.E. - BNJ-R&B-01/2026-27

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Name of Work  | : Electrical Works   |
| 2. No. of Works  | : 04 Nos. Electrical Work  |
| 3. No. of Covers   | : Single Cover   |
| 4. Estimated Cost  | : Rs. 15.26 Lakhs to Rs. 41.08 lakhs   |
| 5. Period of Competition                                     | : Three Calendar Months  |
| 6. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal | : From 12.00 Noon of dated 13.04.2026 to 5.00 P.M. of dated 27.04.2026   |
| 7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal          | : Upto 5.00 P.M. of dated 27.04.2026   |
| 8. Date of opening of bid documents                          | : At 11.00 A.M. of dated 29.04.2026  |
| 9. Class of Contractor                                       | : Specialized Agency having MOU with associate Electrical Contractor (MV/HT or above) having valid licence from ELBO |
| 10. Name and address of Officer Inviting Bid                 | : Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar   |

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in). The Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.  
Sd/- Superintending Engineer Bhanjanagar (R&B), Division

OIPR-34001/34015/1/26-27/0001

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** No.34001/44/2627  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,**  
**GANJAM (R&B) DIVISION NO. I, BERHAMPUR**  
Phone / Fax : (0680) 2233683, e-mail : sernb1.ganjam@yahoo.com  
"e" Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No. SE R&B Divn. No.1 Bam. 02/2026-27  
Lr. No. 4368 Dated : 08.04.2026

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of work  | : E. I. Works  |
| No. of works  | : 06 (Six) No's  |
| Estimated Cost  | : Approximately Rs. 5.87 to 29 Lakh                              |
| Period of Completion  | : One to Three Calendar Months                                   |
| Date and time of Availability of bid document in the portal | : From 10.00 hours of 13.04.2026 to 16.00 hours of 20.04.2026    |
| Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal          | : Upto 16.00 hours of 20.04.2026                                 |
| Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid                | : Superintending Engineer, Ganjam (R&B) Division No.1, Berhampur |

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>  
Sd/- Superintending Engineer Ganjam (R&B) Division No.1 Berhampur

OIPR-34001/34109/1/26-27/0002



When we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have Knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Tragedy As Hope

We live in a world of senseless suffering and impending catastrophe, where it would seem the idea of moral progress has become unintelligible. Two epochal crises afflict contemporary society: the rise of anti-democratic forces and climate change. But what if today's tragedies turn out to be a source of hope?

The authoritarian drift fueled by right-wing populism threatens democracies around the world, including even long-standing ones like the United States, where President Donald Trump's abuse of power seems to know no limits. Even Trump's more moderate European allies constantly attempt to undermine the rule of law. Most recently, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni tried to limit the judiciary's independence through a national referendum. Fortunately, Italians turned out en masse to protect their Constitution.

The crisis of democracy feeds the climate crisis. Trump withdrew the US from the Paris climate agreement and has weakened or dismantled myriad environmental protections. Meloni reversed course on several commitments under the European Union's Green Deal and opposes stricter emissions targets. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has repeatedly blocked or delayed EU-level climate legislation.

Policymakers' unwillingness to address the crisis has left the fate of the planet in the hands of private investors and their (often limited) desire to adopt sustainable technologies. At most, governments incentivize such investors, but rarely replace them. This is why, apart from China, there has been insufficient funding for renewable energy, even as AI investment by Big Tech giants has skyrocketed.

The irrationality and violence of Trump's politics in recent months—from the brutality of the Minneapolis killings and his absurd plan for the reconstruction of Gaza to his imperialistic invasion of Venezuela and the jaw-dropping folly of his war against Iran—have reinforced our era's tragic character. Politics appears dictated by sheer force, while moral ideals, from a healthy democracy to environmental sustainability, seem ludicrous. The space for principled action seems to have vanished.

But we have been here before. Albert Camus famously argued that even in a senseless world, we can create a form of hope through rebellion. Hannah Arendt found hope in the human capacity to start anew even in the face of genocidal events. Martin Luther King, Jr., emphasised that suffering could lead to moral progress and collective transformation. My recently departed colleague, the philosopher Jonathan Lear, explained how loss can be the source of "radical hope" for a good future, even without being able to specify or imagine what that good future would look like.

Recent events seem to vindicate such thinkers. Consider the reawakening, however embryonic, of civil society: democracy's beating heart, and its most precious bulwark against authoritarianism. We saw this in the US with the "No Kings" protests that involved millions of people. We also saw it in the exceptionally high turnout for the Italian referendum, especially in the participation of a significant number of young people, who in the past would have stayed home.

Such awakenings cannot be attributed solely to the gravity of today's conditions or the authoritarian character of today's right-wing governments; even in the face of egregious acts that highlight the importance of politics, apathy can persist. Awakenings require something more: a renewed sense of possibility.

In the decades preceding Trump, a feeling of stagnation and powerlessness had spread in the US and Europe. Many people began to believe that it did not matter who governed, because nothing would change. Right-wing and left-wing governments would all end up doing the same things, adhering to the dictates of neoliberalism. The ability to change course seemed limited by external and internal constraints, from constitutional to fiscal.

There were, of course, moments that spurred hope for change. Barack Obama's election as US president in 2008 was one. But it ended in disappointment. Under Obama, Wall Street banks received large bailouts following the global financial crisis, while millions of Americans lost their homes. Drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia were expanded. More immigrants were deported than under any previous president. Obama, like Europe's center-left governments, ultimately governed within the same framework as his predecessors.

Trump, on the other hand, is living proof that one person holding political power can change the fate of the world—and in the blink of an eye. It is therefore worth fighting to ensure that power ends up in the right hands, or at least not in the hands of dictators or madmen. The ease and arbitrariness with which an autocrat can transform domestic and foreign affairs has given rise to a new democratic activism, and the hope that comes with it.

The same is true for the climate crisis. Who would have thought that the only hope for completing the energy transition could emerge from a senseless war? And yet that is exactly what is happening. Although the outcome of the Iran conflict remains uncertain, among its greatest beneficiaries may be green technologies and renewable energy. After all, Trump's war has revealed the fragility of economies heavily dependent on fossil fuels, with the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz causing energy prices to soar.

As other commentators have noted, China would do well to convene a coalition of willing countries to launch a global push for green investment, boosting demand for its industries. European countries would find it appealing, as would many others (including even the Gulf states). Thus, the hope for a cleaner atmosphere and a more sustainable environment emerges from the tragedy of a senseless war.

Ironically, tragedy—not faith in linear moral progress through which humans learn from past mistakes and avoid their repetition—has become the source of hope for moral and political progress. The rebirth of democracy and the salvation of the planet now depend on it.

The writer is Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

Love possesses not nor will it be possessed, for love is sufficient unto love.

KAHIL GIBRAN

The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.

BLAISE PASCAL

Every breath we take, every step we make, can be filled with peace, joy and serenity.

THICH NHAT HANH

### FOCUS ECONOMY

# GOVT IN DENIAL MODE



When global wars begin to decide what is cooked in Indian kitchens—and whether a neighbourhood tea shop stays open—it is no longer a distant problem, it is a domestic failure



Rajdeep Sardesai

YOU CANNOT BUILD A \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY ON THE BACK OF SHRINKING HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE



Chiara Cordelli

Politics appears dictated by sheer force, while moral ideals, from a healthy democracy to environmental sustainability, seem ludicrous. The space for principled action seems to have vanished

In poll-bound Kerala, the election noise is loud—but the silences are louder. On a recent trip through the coastal state, I noticed something unsettling. In town after town, familiar small tea shops—the lifeblood of everyday conversation—were shuttered. Not all, but enough to be impossible to ignore. A local Malayali tea-seller offered a blunt response: "What do you expect us to do without LPG cylinders? Yes, there is a war in West Asia which has created the scarcity, we are not blaming anyone but why can't the government in Delhi at least acknowledge our problems?"

It was a small detail, easy to miss amid rallies and rhetoric. But it captures the economic undercurrent of India in 2026—one the political class seems reluctant to acknowledge. While the official line insists that all is well, the reality on the ground is far more fragile. The global backdrop is impossible to ignore. Tensions in West Asia have disrupted supply routes, especially along the Strait of Hormuz, pushing up freight and insurance costs. What was once a predictable global supply chain now resembles a Trumpian world dis-order under constant stress. But here is the critical point: global disruptions may trigger the crisis, but domestic policy determines how deeply it is felt. Take LPG. For millions of households, access to clean cooking fuel was one of the most transformative welfare interventions of the past decade. But what use is access without affordability? Across India, there is mounting evidence of families rationing usage, delaying refills, or returning to traditional fuels. The scale of vulnerability is not anecdotal alone. India still imports roughly 85% of its crude oil needs, and LPG import dependence remains above 60%. Every global price spike—triggered by war, sanctions, or supply disruptions—inevitably finds its way into Indian kitchens.

To be fair, the Modi govern-

ment has not been entirely unresponsive. It has cut excise duties on fuel to soften the blow and prioritised domestic LPG consumption. This has provided relief and deserves acknowledgment, though concerns remain that prices may be raised once state elections are over. But that is only part of the story. The more uncomfortable question is this: when global crude prices were low, why was that benefit not passed on to consumers? Instead, taxes were raised, cushioning government revenues while households continued to pay high prices. In effect, gains were internalised, while losses are being socialised. That asymmetry lies at the heart of today's discontent.

The consequences are visible everywhere—if only our leaders stepped out of their VVIP bubble. The tea shop owner in Kerala who shuts down because input costs have soared. The delivery worker in Chennai spending more on fuel than he can afford. The farmer grappling with rising diesel and fertiliser prices without matching returns. The daily wage labourer losing work as small factories struggle. This is how distant wars translate into domestic distress. Yet, the response has often been to downplay the problem, with the Modi government insisting supplies are "adequate" and blaming hoarders or black marketeers.

On the plus side, India's macro story in the last decade is one of resilience: decent growth and relatively low inflation have offered grounds for optimism. But macro stability means little if micro realities are deteriorating. There is also a deeper strategic concern. India has long known its dependence on imported energy. Yet, the push towards genuine energy security has been inconsistent. Compare this with China, which has built buffers—long-term contracts, strategic reserves, diversified sourcing, and rapid expansion of renewable energy. China is not immune to shocks. But it is far better insulated. India, by contrast, still appears more reactive than prepared.

The first step is honesty. Governments do themselves no favours by pretending the pain is limited. People know when their budgets are under strain—when a cylinder costs more, when commuting becomes expensive, when a small business is no longer viable. Acknowledging this reality is not weakness—it is the foundation of credible policy.

The second step is immediate relief. Fuel taxation needs more than episodic cuts. It requires a transparent, rule-based framework—ensuring consumers benefit when global prices fall and are protected when they rise.

Similarly, LPG subsidies must be revisited. Today's pressures

extend beyond the poorest households to a large swathe of the lower middle class. But short-term relief alone will not suffice. India needs a far more serious push towards energy self-sufficiency—accelerating renewable adoption, including at the household level. Electric cooking, backed by reliable power, could be a game-changer. It also means investing in decentralised energy solutions—biogas, local grids—that reduce dependence on global supply chains. And above all, it requires integrating energy policy with economic strategy. Energy underpins agriculture, industry, and services alike.

Right now, that integration appears weak. Instead, what we see is a pattern of firefighting—responding to crises rather than building resilience. That approach may have sufficed in a more stable world. It is increasingly untenable because the world is not becoming more predictable. Conflicts are more frequent. Supply chains more fragile. Shocks more sudden.

And that brings us back to the shuttered tea shops of Kerala. They are not just small businesses closing down. They are warning signs—early signals of stress in the economy's most vulnerable layers.

Governance is not about insisting everything is fine. It is about recognising when it isn't—and acting before the crisis becomes visible to all. Today, too many Indians are coping in silence—cutting back, adjusting, absorbing shocks that should have been softened. You cannot build a \$5 trillion economy on the back of shrinking household resilience.

When global wars begin to decide what is cooked in Indian kitchens—and whether a neighbourhood tea shop stays open—it is no longer a distant problem, it is a domestic failure. And the longer we pretend otherwise, the higher the price we pay.

The writer is senior journalist and author.

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## Reimagining happiness

When humanity dares to utter the word "happiness," it unknowingly steps into a labyrinth of philosophical contradictions. Is happiness an ephemeral whisper of the mind, or the scintillating shadow cast by material success? In the modern age—dominated by consumerism and spectacle—happiness is often reduced to pleasure, comfort, and affluence, shaped and amplified by the seductive imagery of social media. Yet such a reduction is not only simplistic but fundamentally misleading.

Happiness, in truth, is a far more intricate and multidimensional experience, profoundly influenced by culture, technology, and human perception. No universal yardstick can conclusively determine whether an individual is truly happy. To confine happiness within rigid definitions is to rob it of its essence. And yet, global attempts such as the World Happiness Index strive to capture this intangible reality, even as their methodologies invite scrutiny.

The latest global rankings deliver a powerful lesson. The findings of the 2026 report are both revealing and informative. Finland has retained its position as the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year, followed closely by Iceland and Denmark. At the other end of the spectrum, Afghanistan ranks

last (147th), followed by Sierra Leone (146th) and Malawi (145th).

In stark contrast, countries boasting gigantic economies often falter in nurturing well-being. The paradox is glaring: massive wealth coexists with deep loneliness, rising anxiety, and fractured social bonds. The United States, despite being the world's largest economy—faces declining happiness levels because of rising inequality, post-pandemic challenges, rising living costs, and deep social divides and alienation, mental distress—reminding us that prosperity without cohesion breeds emptiness, not fulfilment.

Conversely, Costa Rica offers an inspiring alternative. Despite modest per capita income, it ranks among the happiest nations. With life expectancy exceeding 80 years, strong environmental consciousness, and the absence of a military—allowing greater investment in health and education—it exemplifies how thoughtful policy choices can enhance well-being.

India's position in this global narrative is both sobering and instructive. India, ranked 116th out of 147 countries, has shown a marginal improvement from its 118th position in 2025. However, it continues to lag behind neighbours such as Nepal (99th) and Pakistan (104th), while remaining ahead of Bangladesh

(127th) and Sri Lanka (134th). These rankings, often debated, are derived from six critical indicators and importantly, they are based on a three-year average of survey data, lending them both depth and continuity. Except per capita GDP, factors such as lower life expectancy, eroding social trust, perceived corruption, and limited generosity weigh heavily on India's happiness quotient.

Despite notable GDP growth, India's relatively low ranking exposes a troubling disconnect between economic expansion and lived well-being. The lived experience of many citizens remains inundated by inequality, insecurity, and unfulfilled aspirations. Education does not guarantee employment, urbanization breeds both opportunity and anxiety, and the relentless pressures of modern life which erode mental peace.

Growth, it appears, has not yet seamlessly translated into emotional or social fulfilment and genuine well-being. Mental health concerns—compounded by inadequate social support—are becoming increasingly pronounced. Urban living, with its accompanying stress, pollution, and isolation, further aggravates these conditions. Global comparisons offer valuable insights. The Nordic countries—Finland, Denmark, and Iceland—consistently dominate happiness rankings not

merely due to their wealth, but because of their steadfast commitment to equality, social justice, and institutional trust. Their vigorous public systems ensure universal access to quality healthcare and education, while low corruption fosters confidence in governance. In such environments, happiness is not pursued—it naturally flourishes. These contrasting examples underscore a fundamental truth: wealth alone does not guarantee happiness. When inequality, insecurity, and social fragmentation rise, happiness inevitably declines. The future, therefore, demands a radical reorientation. The pursuit of GDP alone is an impoverished vision of progress. What the world urgently needs is a well-being economy—one that prioritises human dignity over mere output, social security over blind competition, and mental health alongside material growth.

For India, the call to action is unique. Economic expansion must be accompanied by justice, inclusivity, and compassion. Investment in healthcare, education, and meaningful employment is not optional—it is foundational. Equally vital is the restoration of trust—within institutions and among citizens—without which no society can truly prosper.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Strong message

Sir, That courts, of late, are sending strong messages to stakeholders on custodial deaths bodes well for the society. The Madurai Sessions Court has convicted nine policemen, including one inspector and two sub-inspectors, arrested for brutally torturing the Sattankulam father-son duo of Jayaraj and Benicks to death in police custody in 2020, and has sentenced all of them to death. This was a typical case of "fence eating the crop." Additional sessions judge G Muthukumar said. But for the constant monitoring of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, the case could have turned topsy-turvy. The CBI undertook the investigation under the watchful eyes of the High Court. Court directions are flagrantly flouted despite the unambiguous guidelines laid down in 1996 by the Supreme Court in the DK Basu vs State of Bengal case. About 2,739 custodial deaths were reported in 2024-25. The poor have little ammunition to protest in custodial tortures.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

### Fragile peace

Sir, The renewed violence in Manipur exposes critical gaps in the government's conflict management strategy. While security forces had earlier succeeded in reducing large-scale clashes, reopening roads, restoring limited movement, and enabling partial return of displaced families, the fragile peace lacked deep reconciliation. The primary loophole lies in inadequate intelligence coordination and failure to neutralise militant regrouping, particularly among armed factions like Kuki insurgents. Additionally, trust deficit between communities and security forces remained unaddressed, making protests volatile. The recent firing near a Central Reserve Police Force camp underscores poor crowd-control preparedness and absence of calibrated response mechanisms. Immediate steps must include enhanced human intelligence, strict monitoring of armed groups, and unified command among forces. Simultaneously, political dialogue with community leaders, confidence-building measures, and swift accountability in use of force are essential to prevent escalation and restore the path toward lasting normalisation.

RS Narula, PATIALA

NON-USE OF UCC PROVISIONS

# Triple talaq case triggers controversy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Haridwar, April 9: Police in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district have registered a case against a man for allegedly giving triple talaq to his wife over dowry in the Buggawala area, but the case has sparked a controversy as it was not filed under the state's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) law.

According to police sources, the Uttarakhand police currently appear unable to enforce the UCC law in some cases due to delays in software updates to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).

Legal experts say the case falls under the category of a cognisable offence and should be registered under Section 32 of the UCC.

Shaheen, a resident of Bandarjud village in the Buggawala area, filed a police complaint against her husband and his family, accusing them of harassing her for dowry, pronouncing triple talaq and pressuring her to undergo 'halala' for remarriage.

In her complaint, Shaheen



said she was married to Danish two and a half years ago and that within a few days of the marriage she began facing physical and mental harassment for dowry.

According to the complainant, when the alleged atrocities by her husband and in-laws crossed all limits, she informed her parents. When her parents approached her husband to resolve the matter, he allegedly pronounced triple talaq and threw her out of the house.

The complainant alleged that when a settlement was later discussed, a condition of

halala was placed before her for remarriage, after which she approached the police.

Haridwar Rural Superintendent of Police Shekhar Chand Soyal said that after receiving Shaheen's complaint April 4, the police registered a case under Sections 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, Sections 115(2) and 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and Sections 3 and 4 of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, and began an investigation.

Asked why the case was not registered under the UCC, Soyal said that sometimes cas-

es cannot be registered under the law due to issues with the CCTNS portal.

He added that the investigating officer is probing the matter and UCC provisions will be added if applicable.

The UCC was implemented in Uttarakhand in January last year. Legal experts termed the failure to register such a serious case under the law, even after more than a year of its implementation, as concerning.

Lawyer Vasu Garg told PTI that the UCC allows remarriage without any conditions and abolishes practices such as triple talaq and halala.

He said that under Section 32(iii) of the UCC, forcing a woman to comply with any such condition, including halala, before remarriage can attract criminal penalties.

According to him, the punishment under this provision may include a fine, imprisonment, or both, depending on the nature of the violation.

He added that while the state government has been presenting the UCC as a major achievement, the ground reality appears disappointing.



Snow blankets the Kedarnath temple premises following fresh snowfall in the region, in Rudraprayag district, Uttarakhand, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

ARDH KUMBH

## Haridwar civic body to shift raw meat shops out of city

Haridwar Mayor Kiran Jaiswal stated that all meat shops currently operating in the city, both licensed and illegal, will be removed and relocated to the nearby Sarai village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Haridwar, April 9: Ahead of the Ardh Kumbh Mela scheduled for next year, the Haridwar Municipal Corporation has decided to remove all raw meat shops from the urban areas.

This decision was passed by a majority vote during the Municipal Corporation's board meeting held recently.

Haridwar Mayor Kiran Jaiswal stated that all meat shops currently operating in the city, both licensed and illegal, will be removed and relocated to the nearby Sarai village.

To facilitate this, the Municipal Corporation has constructed 57 shops in Sarai village.

She noted that Haridwar is a prominent religious pilgrimage site, attracting a large number of devotees from both within the country and abroad.

This decision was taken with due regard for their sentiments.

The Municipal Corporation also passed a proposal to amend the municipal bylaws. Municipal Commissioner Nandan Kumar explained that, according to the bylaws dating back to 1935, there is already a ban on the sale and consumption of



meat, liquor, and eggs within a five-kilometre radius of Har Ki Pauri.

Now, following the amendment, the sale of raw meat will be completely shifted out of the urban area.

Opposing the proposal, the Mayor alleged that the Congress party has adopted a double standard by opposing the proposal.

On the other hand, Congress Metropolitan President Aman Garg stated that his party is in favour of strictly enforcing the existing bylaws regarding the ban on the sale and consumption of liquor and eggs, alongside meat.

He argued that merely relocating raw meat shops outside the city would not fully safeguard religious sentiments; to achieve that, it is essential to enforce the other existing restrictions as well strictly.

## HARYANA STRENGTHENS WASTE MGMT SYSTEMS

Chief Secretary reviews NGT compliance progress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 9: Haryana is steadily advancing towards scientific and sustainable waste management, with Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi Thursday reviewing the state's progress in compliance with the directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The review reflected a positive trajectory, with major improvements in infrastructure, monitoring mechanisms, and environmental governance, an official statement said.

Chairing a high-level meeting, the chief secretary stressed the importance of continuous monitoring, accurate reporting, and coordinated action across departments to ensure timely compliance with NGT directives.

He reiterated that Haryana is committed to achieving full compliance through a structured and result-oriented approach.

Significant progress has been made on the ground. Scientific waste processing through composting is now operational in 53 Urban Local Bodies, with the output being effectively utilised in agriculture and horticulture.

One waste-to-energy plant is functional at Sonipat, while work is progressing rapidly to



expand processing facilities across the remaining areas.

Legacy waste remediation has also gathered pace, with work completed at a majority of identified sites. The remaining waste is being targeted for scientific disposal within defined timelines, indicating a clear shift towards long-term environmental sustainability.

At the operational level, Haryana has achieved near-universal door-to-door waste collection, covering about 98 per cent of wards, while source segregation has also improved significantly, the statement further said.

The state is now focusing on bridging the remaining gap in waste processing capacity, with a target to achieve full coverage by the end of 2026.

To ensure better coordination and monitoring, district-level task forces have been constituted under Deputy Commissioners, bringing together multiple departments for integrated action. Nodal officers have also been deployed at the urban local body level to strengthen supervision and accountability.

The chief secretary also reviewed earlier observations made by the Tribunal and directed departments to further improve data accuracy, strengthen reporting systems, and expedite ongoing projects related to both solid and liquid waste management.

Commissioner and Secretary, Urban Local Bodies, Ashok Kumar Meena, informed the meeting that with sustained efforts, strong institutional mechanisms, and technology-driven monitoring, Haryana is fast emerging as a model state in environmental management.

Sudhir Rajpal, the Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Forests & Wildlife Department; Yogesh Kumar, Member Secretary of Haryana State Pollution Control Board; Kanwar Singh, Joint Director (Admin), Urban Local Bodies, and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

## CM Saini reviews Samadhan camps



Since the campaign's launch June 10, 2024, around 1.5 lakh complaints have been received across the state, out of which approximately 78 per cent have been resolved

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 9: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Thursday conducted a detailed review of the progress of 'Samadhan Shivirs' being organised across the state to address citizens' grievances.

Attending the review meeting via video conferencing, the chief minister heard complaints by people from various districts and instructed officials to ensure prompt and effective resolution.

Samadhan camps are organised every Monday and Thursday in the offices of deputy commissioners and sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) across all districts. Complaints that can be resolved on the spot are addressed immediately, while resolution of remaining cases is ensured within a week or two, officials said.

Since the campaign's launch June 10, 2024, around 1.5 lakh complaints have been received

across the state, out of which approximately 78 per cent have been resolved, an official statement said.

In Thursday's meeting, the chief minister spoke directly with citizens from various districts, heard their issues, and directed officials to prioritise and resolve pending cases at the earliest, the statement said.

Saini also reviewed pending cases from the years 2024, 2025, and 2026, issuing clear instructions to ensure their timely disposal. During the meeting, the chief minister took serious note of absence of officials in some districts. "Taking the absence of concerned officers in Mahendragarh district and the SDM office in Badshahpur seriously, he directed all deputy commissioners and SDMs to be personally present in Samadhan Shivirs and listen to citizens' grievances," the statement read, adding that strict instructions were issued to officers who have been regularly absent from these review meetings.

Saini stated that a weekly review meeting of Samadhan camps is held every Friday, which should be chaired by respective deputy commissioners. He emphasised that officers must personally chair the meetings and monitor the resolution of pending complaints.

## CM Dhama urges people to visit Dhaulinag Devta Temple

Dhaurinag Devta, also referred to as Dhauri Nag or the 'White Snake God', is a prominent Naga deity worshipped primarily in the Vijaypur region of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon belt

Panchami, drawing large numbers of devotees from nearby areas and beyond.

Emphasising its spiritual appeal, he added, "Upon arriving in Bageshwar, you too must certainly pay a visit to this sacred temple." The post was accompanied by a 37-second video showcasing scenic visuals of the temple premises, including panoramic mountain views, temple bells, and devotees engaged in worship, highlighting the serene and devotional atmosphere of the site.

Dhaurinag Devta, also referred to as Dhauri Nag or the 'White Snake God', is a prominent Naga deity worshipped primarily in the Vijaypur region of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon belt.

The temple is situated atop a picturesque hill at an altitude of approximately 1,840 metres, around 1.5 to 2 kilometres from Vijaypur town and about 25 kilometres from Bageshwar, offering sweeping views of the Himalayan landscape surrounded by dense forests of pine, oak, and rhododendron.

According to local belief, Dhaurinag is regarded as the son of Kaliya Nag, the serpent from the Yamuna, subdued by Lord Krishna. Following



Krishna's victory, it is believed that Kaliya Nag and his family migrated to the Kumaon hills. Dhaurinag, considered the eldest son, is said to have arrived in the Bageshwar region, with his name 'White Snake' symbolising purity and calmness.

Legends narrate that Dhaurinag undertook intense pen-

ance dedicated to Lord Shiva, eventually transforming from a potentially fearsome entity into a benevolent guardian revered by local communities.

A widely shared local folklore explains his enduring connection with the people of the region. It is believed that upon arriving in the Vijaypur hills,

Dhaurinag resided in an oak tree. During a forest fire one night, he called out for help. While the Kandpals of Kanda could not respond, the Dhapolas of Dhapolasera alerted the Chandolas of Pokhri, along with the Churmals and Bhools, who collectively helped rescue him and guide him to safety.

In gratitude, Dhaurinag is believed to have blessed these communities and vowed to protect the surrounding region, including 22 villages, becoming their Ishtadevta or Kuldevta. This episode continues to shape local traditions and devotional practices even today.

Another version of the folklore suggests that upon his arrival in the region, Dhaurinag called out to various community groups, who then served him and received his blessings of protection.

He is also believed to have entrusted specific families, including the Pant and Dhama lineages, with the responsibility of performing regular worship and rituals at the temple, a tradition that has been passed down through generations.

A Shiv Ling installed within the temple further reinforces its deep association with Lord Shiva worship.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, April 9: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama spoke about the significance of the Dhaurinag Devta Temple located in the Vijaypur area of Bageshwar district recently, describing it as an important centre of faith and devotion in the region.

Taking to X, the Chief Minister wrote, "The Dhaurinag Devta Temple, located in the Vijaypur area of Bageshwar district, is a major centre of faith and devotion."

His remarks brought renewed attention to the temple's religious and cultural importance in the Kumaon region.

CM Dhama further noted that special worship and rituals are organised at the temple on occasions such as Rishi Panchami, Naag Panchami, and Navratri

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO. III BHUBANESWAR

No.34001/45/2627 bbsrrandb03@yahoo.com Date - 31.03.2026  
60 Estg. No. - 2499 Government of Odisha "e"-Procurement Notice No (99) of 2025-26

| Bid Identification No : C.C. (R&B) 03                       |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Name of the Work  | Road Works   |
| 2 Total No. of works  | 2 Nos work   |
| 3 Estimated Cost  | i) Rs.42,71,000.00, ii) Rs.22,92,500.00  |
| 4 Class of Contractor                                       | "C" & "B" Class Contractor   |
| 5 Period of Completion                                      | 1 (One) Calendar Month   |
| 6 Type of Tender  | Single Cover System (Online)   |
| 7 Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal | From 08.04.2026 at 10.30 A.M. to 18.04.2026 at 5.30 P.M.   |
| 8 Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal        | 18.04.2026, upto 5.30 P.M.   |
| 9 Name & Address of the Officer inviting Bid                | Er.Narendra Kumar Ghadai, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. III, Bhubaneswar |

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>  
N.B : Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
BBSR (R&B) Division No. III,  
BBSR

OIPR-34001/34185/1/26-27/0001



What we set out to do was not merely fight an election, but to turn it into a movement to protect our civilisational values, our culture, and our land

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SIKKIM SCHOOL BANS STAFF REELS DURING WORK HOURS

A government school in Sikkim's Dikchu has banned personal reels by staff members during duty hours, in a bid to ensure that students and teachers remain focused on studies



JANAKPURI PIT DEATH CASE

Delhi Police files 877-page chargesheet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 9: The Delhi Police has filed an 877-page chargesheet in the Janakpuri pit death case, naming three accused and detailing alleged lapses linked to the execution of a construction project, an official said Thursday.

The chargesheet was submitted before a court April 7, police said, adding that the case was registered February 6.

According to a police statement, the accused are Himanshu Gupta (45), a suspended director of the main contractor company, KKSUN Private Limited, Rajesh Kumar (47), a sub-contractor associated with the project and Yogesh (23), a labourer deployed at the site.

The accident took place on the night of February 5 when Kamal Dhyani, a resident of Kailashpuri, was returning home from his office in Rohini and fell into a 15-foot-deep pit dug by the Delhi

Jal Board in the Janakpuri area. A police officer said the deceased worked at a call centre for a private bank.

The 877-page chargesheet includes detailed findings on the role and responsibilities of the accused persons, contractual arrangements, and on-site conditions and coordinations at the time of the incident. Police said the probe examined multiple aspects, including compliance with safety norms, labour deployment, and execution practices adopted during the course of the work.

Statements of witnesses, technical assessments, and documentary evidence form part of the voluminous chargesheet, the officer said. Himanshu Gupta, as a senior functionary of the contracting firm, was alleged to be responsible for overall supervision and ensuring adherence to safety protocols, while Rajesh Kumar, the sub-contractor, allegedly handled execution at the ground level.



People take a stroll during rainfall, in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Mamata rebukes PM's fish production claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 9: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for claiming that her government failed to attain self-sufficiency in fish production, and accused him of misrepresenting facts.

Addressing a public rally at Agarpara in North 24 Parganas district, she also alleged that people are not allowed to eat non-vegetarian food in BJP-ruled states.

Earlier, Bengal used to import fish from Andhra Pradesh, but that has been stopped, Banerjee said, and urged Modi to keep track of these developments.

Prime Minister Modi, while delivering his speech at a public rally in Haldia, alleged that the TMC government failed to match fish production with its high demand in the state.

The Prime Minister said that the BJP, after coming to power in the state, would make the state self-sufficient in fisheries and the seafood sector.

Banerjee said, "You (the Centre) export meat from here (Bengal). You export beef from here to Oman. If you are allergic to fish and meat, why do you do that?" Later, at a rally in Baguihati area in the outskirts of Kolkata, the CM accused the BJP of trying to create a situation "similar to the President's rule" with the EC's help.

Referring to Modi's allegation that Bengal has turned into "a factory of infiltrators," Banerjee claimed that the Centre had said in Parliament in 2025 that around 2,200 infiltrators are in the country. "Then how do your leaders talk about lakhs of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas? (It appears) that we are all Rohingyas, and you are the only



citizen of this land," the TMC chief said.

Banerjee asked, "What is the BSF doing? What is your Home Minister Amit Shah doing? Why don't you ask for resignation of Amit Shah for that?"

Asking Modi "not to cross limits," the CM said she would then be forced to come out with more facts.

She said, "You say something and do the other thing, you speak lies. Who has forgotten your claims in 2014 that there would be 2 crore jobs. What happened to that? What happened to the claim about Rs 15 lakh entering everyone's bank account?" Banerjee accused the Centre of unleashing agencies like ED and CBI on opposition leaders and businessmen close to them. She claimed Modi is uttering 'Sonar Bangla' in a distorted way using a teleprompter in rallies to profess his "fake love", and is spreading falsehood about Durga Puja celebrations in the state which got an UNESCO tag.

The TMC supremo charged BJP leaders with insulting Bengal's icons like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Rabindranath Tagore.

Earlier, Bengal used to import fish from Andhra Pradesh, but that has been stopped, Banerjee said, and urged Modi to keep track of these developments

Prime Minister Modi, while delivering his speech at a public rally in Haldia, alleged that the TMC government failed to match fish production with its high demand in the state

She alleged that Modi is changing the Constitution, distorting history and believes in the "religion of riots, not in the religion of humanity".

Banerjee claimed that the poll surveys of some media houses are showing an anti-TMC trend, as those were dictated by the BJP.

She cautioned that after deleting names in the SIR, the BJP will implement the NRC.

The CM claimed that the BJP will be sending their people to influence the counting December 4. She asked people and party activists to be on guard so that any stampede-like situation is averted at her rallies and roadshows.

Banerjee said that because of "an overwhelming crowd response" at a padayatra in Baranagar constituency, a stampede-like situation had occurred.

She also expressed confidence that she will win by a huge margin in Bhabanipur, where she is pitted against BJP's Suvendu Adhikari.

Banerjee also cautioned people that the BJP will be sending agents to individuals to hand over details of their account numbers for malpractices before the polls. The TMC supremo alleged that people are being harassed in BJP-ruled states for speaking in Bengali and accused BJP of branding Bengali speakers as infiltrators.

Cong slams India's COP33 bid pullback

The Opposition party said the decision also calls into question the government's true commitment to take on more ambitious carbon mitigation goals in the short and medium term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 9: The Congress Thursday attacked the Centre over India withdrawing its bid to host the COP33 climate summit in 2028, and said it reflects the Modi government's true commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement both in letter and spirit.

The Opposition party said the decision also calls into question the government's true commitment to take on more ambitious carbon mitigation goals in the short and medium term.

Congress general secretary and former environment minister Jairam Ramesh recalled that December 1, 2023, the prime minister had announced grandly in Dubai that India would be hosting the annual UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP) in India in late 2028. "Clearly the intention was to milk the global gathering for whatever it is worth in the months before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections like Mr. Modi



did by having the G20 Summit in New Delhi a few months before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls," Ramesh said on X.

"Unexpectedly last night, it was announced that India will not be hosting the high-profile 2028 Conference. No reasons have been given for this sudden decision. But it does reflect on the Modi Govt's true commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement both in letter and spirit," the Congress general in-charge communications said.

It also calls into question the Modi government's true commitment to take on more ambitious carbon mitigation goals in the short and medium term, Ramesh said.

T'gana HC adjourns hearing on Khera's anticipatory bail plea

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court Thursday adjourned the hearing to April 10 on the anticipatory bail petition filed by Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case filed against him by the Assam government over his allegations against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife. Congress leader and senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, alleged political vendetta in the case by the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government.

RG Kar case: CBI may question Sanjay Roy

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court Thursday said the CBI may question convict Sanjay Roy or any other suspect in the RG Kar rape-murder case. Hearing a petition filed by the parents of the victim doctor seeking further probe into the crime, in which former civic volunteer Sanjay Roy was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment till the end of his natural life, the court said that for the purpose of investigation, the central agency may question any person.

Congress not to contest Baramati Assembly bypoll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Pune, April 9: The Opposition Congress Thursday opted out of the bypoll to the Baramati Assembly seat in Maharashtra at the last moment, giving a virtual walkover to ruling NCP candidate and Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar though a contest will still take place as 22 other nominees remain in the fray.

Deputy Chief Minister and sitting Baramati MLA Ajit Pawar, the husband of Sunetra, the Congress withdrew its candidate in the wake of calls from ruling allies Nationalist Congress Party, BJP and also its Opposition partner NCP (SP).

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, state Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal sought to frame the decision to climbdown as a move rooted in Maharashtra's political culture and decorum and referred to the death of Ajit Pawar in an air crash just over two months ago.

Soon after his announcement, Congress candidate Akash More withdrew his nomination from the high-profile assembly seat, a Pawar family bastion in Pune district, just before end of the deadline. Sapkal made it clear his party's decision had nothing to do with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, a BJP leader, speaking to him with a request for an unopposed election of Sunetra Pawar from the seat won by her husband eight times in the past.

Andhra CM Naidu targets land resurvey 2.0 by 2027

Vemuru (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Thursday said the government aims to complete land resurvey 2.0 by March 2027 and distribute 1.12 crore pattadar passbooks across the state. The CM, while participating in the 'Mee Bhoomi Mee Haku' (Your Land, Your Right) programme in Bapatla district, distributed pattadar passbooks and highlighted the government's commitment to transparency and secure land ownership for citizens across the state.

Parents to receive daily SMS alerts on children's school attendance

Declaring it as the next big leap in Punjab's 'Sikhya Kranti', Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said the state, already ranked number one in the PARAKH survey, is now moving from recognition to results by tightening classroom accountability and scaling proven teaching practices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 9: Parents will now receive daily SMS alerts regarding their children's school attendance as the Punjab government Thursday rolled out a state-wide attendance-tracking system under its Mission Samrath 4.0, a flagship foundational learning programme. Declaring it as the next big

leap in Punjab's 'Sikhya Kranti', Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said the state, already ranked number one in the PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) survey, is now moving from recognition to results by tightening classroom accountability and scaling proven teaching practices. He underscored that the state



government raised the education budget to Rs 19,279 crore in 2026-27 from Rs 12,657 crore in 2021-22, ensuring funds reach classrooms rather than remain stuck in files, driving visible transformation from basic infrastructure to measurable learning outcomes across government schools.

Bains noted that the state government has introduced the attendance-tracking system as part of Mission Samrath 2026-27. Emphasising the impact of the programme, the minister stated, "Mission Samrath has transformed classroom dynamics. This phase focuses on enhancing teaching quality

and accountability through attendance tracking, improved monitoring and sharing the best practices. Our goal is to ensure that every child achieves strong foundational learning."

He further underlined improvements in school infrastructure under the Bhagwant Mann government, stating that every senior secondary school with more than 500 students now has a dedicated campus manager, while schools with over 100 students have been provided security guards and sanitation staff, once unavailable facilities.

Explaining the focus of Mission Samrath 4.0, he said, "The programme ensures that children in grades 3 to 8 master reading, writing and mathematics." He stated

that Punjab has surpassed the national average in foundational learning by 18 per cent in grade 3 and 26-28 per cent in grade 6. Bains and former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia also released the Mission Samrath Compendium, documenting 38 proven classroom practices developed by Punjab's teachers, which will now be scaled across government schools to accelerate learning outcomes, particularly for students requiring additional support.

Explaining the advantage of the SMS alerts, Sisodia said, "A parent, busy elsewhere, receives a simple message: 'Your ward has reached school safely.' That small act of accountability, that real-time reassurance, is worth more than a thousand grand declarations."



**of the day** **QUOTE**

Today, I am standing on a potato farming land. Farmers are very upset here. Mamtata Banerjee said that potatoes would be purchased, but the block offices said that there were no circulars for this



A party that shields sexual assault accused, garlands rapists, and protects the powerful, even when linked via email to those convicted of girl child abuse, has no moral authority to sermonise



Ensuring income growth, dignity and livelihood stability of weavers is among the state government's top priorities, and stressed the need for a coordinated, result-oriented approach to address challenges faced by the sector



The richest people in the world are: 77% entrepreneurs 20% investors 8% athletes 3% artists 0% employees

**POST OF THE DAY**

Nobody got rich through a salary. It's a scam.

**SHORT TAKES**

**HP: Fresh snowfall in high altitudes**

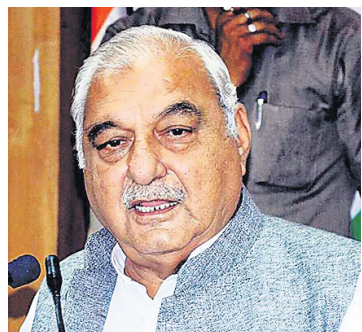
**Shimla:** High altitude areas of Lahaul and Spiti and Shimla districts received fresh snowfall while widespread moderate to heavy rains occurred across the state, the local Meteorological station said Thursday. The state capital, Shimla, and its surrounding areas experienced a severe hailstorm. Wintry conditions returned to the state, with minimum temperatures ranging from two to seven degrees below normal, while maximum temperatures dropped by 9 to 14 degrees below normal in most locations over the past 24 hours.

**Student found hanging from ceiling fan in hostel**

**Kurukshetra:** A student of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Kurukshetra, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in his hostel room, with police suspecting he died by suicide, officials said Thursday. The exact cause behind the extreme step remains unclear, they added. According to police, the deceased Priyanshu Sharma was a third-year B Tech student in the civil engineering department, and a resident of Shersha village in Haryana's Sirsa district.

**Austrian Chancellor to visit India next week**

**New Delhi:** Austria's Federal Chancellor Christian Stocker will undertake a four-day visit to India beginning April 14 to shore up bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including trade, investment and critical technologies. The top Austrian leader will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on India-Austria bilateral ties and exchange views on regional and global issues, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Thursday.



Farmers are being treated like criminals; all in all, the government's objective appears to be to keep farmers entangled in this bureaucratic maze so that it can avoid having to procure their crops altogether

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | FORMER HARYANA CM

**INDIAN STUDENTS IN IRELAND ROSE**

Indian students' interest in Ireland grew by 38 per cent in 2024, even as overall outbound mobility declined by nearly 15 per cent, signalling a clear shift in how students and families are evaluating global education choices, according to a new report



**Nitish to take oath as RS member today**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** Bihar's long-time chief minister Nitish Kumar will take oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha Friday, paving the way for the formation of a new government in Bihar.

Kumar arrived in the national capital Thursday and was welcomed at the airport by party leaders including JD(U)'s national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha.

"I have arrived here to take oath," Kumar told reporters at the airport.

He will be administered the oath as a member of the upper house in the chamber of Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan. With Kumar assuming his Rajya Sabha role, marking the end of his rule in Bihar, the NDA is likely to elect a new chief minister of Bihar April 14. Bihar minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary said Nitish Kumar will take the oath after being elected to the Rajya Sabha and will soon relinquish the post of chief minister.

"Bihar will have an NDA government and will certainly follow the Nitish Kumar-created 'Nitish model', as it has been running for the past 20 years," Chaudhary said.

Nitish has already resigned as a member of the State Legislative Council. He had resigned March 30 as an MLC, after he was elected to the Rajya Sabha.

The JD(U) supremo was elected to the upper house of Parliament March 16, and he had to quit as an MLC in the 14-day period after his election.

**BOMB ATTACK Massive protests in Manipur**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, April 9:** Defying curfew, thousands of demonstrators across five valley districts of Manipur held protest rallies and burnt tyres against the bomb attack that claimed the lives of two children in Bishnupur district.

At Tiddim Line in Imphal West district, hundreds of people under the aegis of the All Manipur United Clubs Organisation staged a rally from its office near Kwakeithel, denouncing the killings and demanding the immediate arrest of the perpetrators.

Several children, holding posters of the two minors killed in the attack, also attended the rally, which was stopped by security forces from advancing further near Kwakeithel.

Later, representatives of AMUCO and others were escorted to meet Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh to address their concerns.

On April 7, a 5-year-old boy and his 6-month-old sister were killed when suspected militants hurled a bomb at their house at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district.

Soon after the incident, a mob of around 500 protesters stormed a CRPF camp near Gelmol, a few hundred metres from Tronglaobi, and engaged in vandalism and burning of security vehicles.

In the ensuing firing by personnel, three protesters died while 30 were injured.

On Thursday, at Samurou in Imphal West district, hundreds of protestors also at-



**CM promises stern action**

**Imphal:** Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh Thursday said his government was taking all necessary measures in coordination with the Centre to take action against the perpetrators of the Bishnupur bomb attack. The chief minister also directed the top civil and police officers to make every effort to improve the law and order situation. After a meeting with representatives of the All Manipur United Clubs Organisation (AMUCO) and other groups at the state secretariat, Singh said the government is in constant touch with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to ensure an effective response and restore normalcy. The meeting was also attended by state Home Minister K Govindas Singh and several MLAs.

tempted to head towards the CM's official bungalow but were stopped by police.

Protesters also burnt tyres and stopped vehicular movements at Moirang Lamkhai and Ningthoukhong in Bishnupur district.

Similar incidents of tyre

burning were reported from Khurai in Imphal East district and parts of Thoubal and Kakching districts.

In Imphal, a lawyer allegedly attempted self-immolation in front of the Lok Bhavan in protest against the bomb attack, officials said.

**Congress to hold CWC meet today**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** The Congress will hold a meeting of its working committee Friday, where the party's top leadership is expected to deliberate on the government's move to amend the women's reservation law, the proposed delimitation exercise, and the West Asia conflict, sources said.

The meeting comes days ahead of the three-day sitting of Parliament, during which the government is set to bring bills to implement the Women's Reservation Act before the 2029 parliamentary polls and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, with 273 reserved for women.

The Union Cabinet is learnt to have cleared Wednesday draft bills which seek to implement the Women's Reservation

Act before the 2029 parliamentary polls and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats.

Sources said the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting will be held at 3 pm at the party's Indira Bhawan headquarters here.

Top leaders will deliberate on the government's move to amend the women's reservation law, proposed delimitation exercise and the West Asia conflict issue, among other important matters, they said.

The Congress has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using the proposal to amend the women quota law for its early implementation as a poll issue. The opposition party last week alleged that the government has called a "special session" of Parliament for passing bills related to amending the women's quota law and

delimitation to "grab political mileage" in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu polls, which, it claimed, is a "gross violation" of the model code of conduct.

Asserting that the government's push for a rushed delimitation exercise would have "dangerous consequences", Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh had said, "We do not want any disturbance in the present differentials and relative strength."

The Congress also cautioned against any haste in amending the Constitution regarding delimitation of parliamentary and assembly constituencies, saying it is a sensitive matter, and the government must tread carefully, as the exercise might put several states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala at a significant disadvantage.



A security personnel keeps vigil as voters wait in a queue at a polling station during the by-election to the Dharmanagar Assembly constituency, in North Tripura district

**11 hurt as gas leak triggers fire in Yamunanagar**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Yamunanagar, April 9:** Eleven persons, including seven children, suffered burn injuries after a gas cylinder leak triggered an explosion and a blaze at a residential quarter for migrant labourers here Thursday, police said.

According to officials, most victims sustained 50-60 per cent burns with the young children crying and writhing in pain.

Jagadhari Station House Officer Tarsem Kumar told PTI that a family residing near a factory in Salempur Bangar area was

According to officials, most victims sustained 50-60 per cent burns with the young children crying and writhing in pain

preparing food over firewood during the morning hours when the incident took place.

There was a leakage from an LPG cylinder kept nearby, which burst into flames upon coming in contact with the

open fire, causing an explosion which severely damaged the walls of the quarter," he said.

Among the injured were a two-month-old infant and a pregnant woman. Two 43-year-old men, and seven children between the ages of five and ten were also injured.

The injured were admitted to the civil hospital in Jagadhari, Kumar said, adding that those who suffered serious burn injuries were later referred to a hospital in Chandigarh.

Investigation is underway to ascertain how the blaze was triggered, he said.

**Delhi's 'urban oasis': 90-acre Lodhi Garden turns 90**

The horticultural delight, nestled in the heart of the national capital, bordering the posh Lodhi Estate and upscale Khan Market, was opened April 9, 1936, as 'The Lady Willingdon Park', named after the then Vicereine of India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** Home to centuries-old tombs and some of the most exotic plants and bird species, Delhi's iconic Lodhi Garden - often described as the 'best urban oasis in Asia' - turned 90 Thursday.

The horticultural delight, nestled in the heart of the national capital, bordering the posh Lodhi Estate and upscale Khan Market, was opened April 9, 1936, as 'The Lady Willingdon Park', named after the then Vicereine of India.

Virtually acting as the lungs of Delhi, the wide green space, spread over 90 acres, is a top

favourite of many for morning and evening walks, as also for joggers, or those looking just for some quieter moments away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

This garden was laid out after shifting what was then the village of Khairpur, on the outskirts of New Delhi.

At 1911 Delhi Durbar, the British had announced shifting of their imperial capital in India from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi, and a new capital city - later named New Delhi - was built, which was formally inaugurated February 13, 1931, by the then Viceroy Lord Irwin.

With its beautiful flora and



fauna, the Lodhi Garden is also a top choice of many picnickers and tourists, both domestic and foreign.

Besides, scattered monuments, a variety of plants and trees can be found here, such

as neem, jamun, royal bottle palm, bamboo, eucalyptus and numerous birds, including parakeets, mynahs, kingfishers, babblers, and hornbills.

"The garden happens to contain an unusually rich variety of architectural styles, ranging from Sayyid and Lodi to Mughal. The present landscaping was done by American architect Joseph Allen Stein (in 1968), and modified by a group of Japanese landscape designers," according to INTACH.

Incidentally, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), a Delhi-based non-profit body that works for the preservation

of unprotected heritage in the country, is located in the vicinity of the garden.

Purnima Datt, head of the HECS (Heritage Education and Communication Service) department at INTACH headquarters, says the garden is "our close neighbour" and also virtuously a "living classroom for students" as it is an abode of so many species of plants, trees and birds, butterflies and other fauna.

Datt said teams of INTACH have also done some conservation work in the garden in the past, and a pamphlet documenting the garden was published several years ago.

# international



**I am determined to protect the British people from paying the price for [Russian President] Putin's aggression in their household bills**  
KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK

## AMBASSADOR PREETI SARAN RE-ELECTED TO KEY UN BODY

Veteran diplomat Preeti Saran has been re-elected to the prestigious UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for a fresh three-year tenure starting 2027, in recognition of her expertise in steering the body through complex global socio-economic challenges. Ambassador Saran is currently serving as the chair of the CESCR, the UN body responsible for monitoring how member nations implement international covenants on economic and social rights



### of the day quote

From today, whenever I travel, the officers accompanying me will use consolidated transport in small buses to reduce fuel consumption and operational costs during this period



China's position on the Iran issue is above-board and straightforward. We have always upheld an objective and impartial stance



Had it not been for this shock, we would have been upgrading global growth. But now, even our most hopeful scenario involves a growth downgrade



# HORMUZ AT NEAR STANDSTILL

## IRAN WARNS SHIPS TO KEEP TO ITS WATERS

REUTERS

London, April 9: Ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz stood at well below 10% of normal volumes Thursday despite a US-Iran ceasefire as Tehran asserted its control by warning ships to keep to its territorial waters while doing so. Hundreds of tankers and other ships have been stuck inside the Gulf since the Iran war began Feb 28, cutting global oil supply by 20% in the world's biggest-ever supply disruption. Prices for some physical oil grades hit fresh all-time highs Thursday as the crisis showed little signs of abating.

Iran must open the strait without conditions, the CEO of UAE state oil giant ADNOC said Thursday.

Just seven ships had passed through the strait in the past 24 hours versus about 140 normally, ship-tracking data showed. They included one oil products tanker and six dry bulk carriers, data from Kpler, Lloyd's List Intelligence and Signal Ocean showed. A chemical tanker was set to cross destined for India, ship-tracking data on the MarineTraffic and Pole Star Global platforms showed.

"Most shipping lines are likely to remain cautious, and two weeks will not be enough to clear the backlog even if there is a marked increase in traffic," said Torbjorn Soltvedt at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have told vessels to sail through Iranian waters around Larak Island to avoid the risk of naval mines in the usual lanes through the strait, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported Thursday.

Vessels are to enter the strait



IRGC WANTS SHIPS TO PASS NEAR IRANIAN ISLAND, TASNIM REPORTS TRAFFIC WELL BELOW 10% OF NORMAL VOLUMES  
OIL CRISIS WORSENS AS FIFTH OF GLOBAL SUPPLY STILL DISRUPTED SENIOR EUROPEAN OFFICIAL SAYS NATO COMMUNITY REMAINS WORRIED AFTER RUTTE-TRUMP MEETING  
BRITAIN LEADS GROUP OF 40 NATIONS DRAFTING MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC PLAN FOR HORMUZ  
FRANCE'S MACRON SAYS 15 COUNTRIES AIM TO RESUME TRAFFIC THROUGH THE STRAIT

north of Larak Island and exit just south of it until further notice in coordination with the IRGC's navy, Tasnim quoted the IRGC as saying. Risks persist for ships not authorised by Iran, particularly those affiliated with Israel and the US, British maritime security company Ambrey said in an advisory. "Even shipping with apparent approval has been turned back in recent weeks mid-transit," it said.

### TRUMP WANTS HORMUZ COMMITMENTS WITHIN DAYS

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has briefed some capitals that US President Donald Trump wants concrete commitments within the next few days for help securing the Strait of Hormuz, three European diplomats told Reuters Thursday.

Rutte met with Trump in Washington Wednesday, amid

tensions within the alliance over the Iran war.

"The Secretary General is in contact with Allies about his discussions in Washington," NATO spokesperson Allison Hart said Thursday. "It's clear that the United States expects concrete commitments and action to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz," she added.

The US president has repeatedly called NATO a "paper tiger" and threatened to withdraw from the 32-member transatlantic alliance in recent weeks, arguing that Washington's European allies have relied on US security guarantees while providing inadequate support for the US-Israeli bombing campaign in Iran.

"We note the frustration in Washington, but they did not consult allies either before or after starting this war," said

# UK blunts Russian sub threat to undersea cables



REUTERS

London, April 9: Britain deployed military vessels to prevent any attacks on cables and pipelines by Russian submarines which spent more than a month in and around British waters earlier this year, its defence minister John Healey said Thursday.

Britain accused Russia of using the distraction of events in the Middle East to try to conduct the covert operation in the High North maritime region, home to key shipping routes and critical infrastructure such as undersea cables.

Healey said British forces and allies including Norway tracked and deterred malign activity by the Russian vessels, adding that the submarines had now left the area and there were no signs of damage to underwater infrastructure.

Revealing the operation publicly at a press conference, Healey said the intent was to show Russian President Vladimir Putin the activity had been detected.

"To President Putin, I say 'We see you. We see your activity over our cables and our pipelines, and you should know that any attempt to damage

them will not be tolerated and will have serious consequences," he said.

"Our armed forces left them in no doubt that they were being monitored, that their movements were not covert, as President Putin planned, and that their attempted secret operation had been exposed."

Russia's embassy in London did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Moscow has previously denied allegations of involvement in a serious of incidents in which European countries' cables were damaged.

### BRITAIN SENT WARSHIP AND PATROL AIRCRAFT

Healey said the Russian operation involved a Russian Akula class attack submarine and two specialist submarines from Moscow's Main Directorate for Deep Sea Research (GUGD).

"They are designed to survey underwater infrastructure during peacetime, and sabotage it in conflict," Healey said.

After detecting the Russian vessels passing into international waters, Britain sent a frigate, a support tanker and a maritime patrol aircraft to monitor their movements.

### SHORT TAKES

#### IMF strikes staff-level deal with Sri Lanka

Colombo: Sri Lanka and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached staff-level agreement on economic policies to conclude the combined fifth and sixth reviews of the island nation's reform programme, the global body said in a statement Thursday. An IMF team was here in Sri Lanka from March 26 until April 9 to conduct the combined fifth and sixth reviews of Sri Lanka's reform programme supported by the global lender's Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The two tranches together will release \$700 million from the \$2.9 billion bailout in 2023. The IMF noted that ongoing economic reforms implemented by Sri Lankan authorities have supported the country's recovery, with foreign reserves increasing and both real GDP growth and revenue mobilisation exceeding expectations.

#### 2 killed in plane crash in Arizona

Marana (Arizona): Two people have died in a fiery plane crash at a small airport in Arizona, officials said Wednesday. The plane went off the runway and burst into flames, Marana Mayor Jon Post said. City spokesperson Vic Hathaway said there were two people on board the plane. They have not been identified. No other injuries were reported and no other aircraft were involved, the Marana police department said in a news release. The National Transportation Safety Board was taking over the investigation into the cause of the crash, police said.

#### 10 Indian fishermen arrested by SL Navy

Colombo: At least 10 Indian fishermen have been arrested and their trawler confiscated by the Sri Lankan Navy for alleged poaching in Sri Lankan waters. A release from the Sri Lankan Navy Thursday said it seized an Indian fishing boat and apprehended 10 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters in the sea area North of Mannar Wednesday. So far, this year the Sri Lankan Navy has seized 16 trawlers and arrested 112 Indian fishermen for alleged poaching. At least 30 Indian fishermen were repatriated from Sri Lanka Tuesday, authorities said. The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats in several alleged incidents of illegally entering Sri Lankan territorial waters.

# Indian delegation to visit US to discuss trade deal: Gor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 9: The US Thursday said it looked forward to hosting the Indian delegation here later this month to discuss the bilateral trade deal agreed to in February.

US Ambassador to India Sergei Gor made the announcement of the Indian delegation's upcoming visit to Washington after a meeting with America's Trade Representative Jamieson Greer here.

Gor, who is currently on a visit to the US, also met Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and several other US officials. "Highly Productive meeting with @USTradeRep Ambassador Greer to discuss advancing @POTUS trade priorities in South and Central Asia," Gor said in a post on X.

"The United States and India have previously agreed to a trade deal, and we look forward to welcoming an Indian delegation to Washington later this month," he said.

The meeting comes a day af-

ter Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri launched the India-US Trade Facilitation Portal here as the two countries eye the \$500 billion bilateral trade target.

India and the US announced a framework for an interim trade agreement in February, after months of negotiations between the two delegations.

This is a framework that promotes reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade, enhances market access and strengthens supply chain resilience immediately through expanded preferential access, rigorous rules of origin and addressing non-tariff barriers across various sectors.

In a post on X after his meeting with the Treasury Secretary Bessent, Gor described him as a "true leader who's done an incredible job in handling complex economic issues."

Gor said he met Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau to discuss his recent trip to the region and the future of commercial diplomacy in South and Central Asia.



Visitors pose for pictures amongst tulips in bloom, part of one and a half million bulbs grown for Tulleys Tulip Fest at Tulleys Farm, West Sussex, Britain

# The empty mile: Inside the collapse of Michigan's EV dreams

Five years ago, the future of the American automotive industry was rising out of a Michigan cornfield. Magna International, North America's largest parts supplier, broke ground on a million-square-foot facility designed to be the beating heart of General Motors' electric revolution.

Today, that factory stands as a monument to a "messy breakup" between the US consumer and the electric vehicle. The building, larger than 20 football fields, sits largely desolate—a casualty of cratering demand, shifting political winds, and a supply chain left holding the bag for a \$200 billion gamble that has, so far, failed to pay out.

### A GHOST TOWN IN THE RUST BELT

The St. Clair plant was built specifically to produce battery enclosures for the Hummer

EV and the electric Chevrolet Silverado. At its peak, the facility was expected to employ 900 people. Now, after waves of layoffs, only a few hundred remain, working a single, shrunken shift.

"We had rows and rows of battery trays. We were just boxing them up and throwing them in warehouses," says Daniel Martin, a former production supervisor whose job was eventually cut. "I kept saying, 'What will happen if this falls through?'"

The answer is a financial quagmire. Magna invested roughly \$575 million to outfit the plant with assembly-line robots that now sit idle. While GM has paid out approximately \$400 million to various suppliers for "true them up" for modified or canceled contracts, those payments represent only



a fraction of the long-term capital losses.

### THE PERFECT STORM

The retreat from EVs isn't just about consumer preference; it's a collision of geopolitics and policy. While the war

in Iran has spiked gas prices—historically a catalyst for fuel-efficient sales—industry leaders aren't biting.

Paul Jacobson, GM's Chief Financial Officer, notes that it takes months of sustained high prices for Amer-

icans to pivot. "We certainly don't see it today," he says.

The landscape has been further flattened by the reversal of Biden-era incentives. The Trump administration's elimination of the \$7,500 tax credit, combined with the scrapping of strict fuel-economy mandates, has removed the primary engines of EV growth.

### THE SURVIVAL PIVOT

For Magna CEO Swamy Kotagiri, the goal is now survival through flexibility. The company is currently surveying the St. Clair floor, attempting to determine which robots can be repurposed for gas or hybrid parts. In a rare move, GM has even lifted a non-compete clause, allowing Magna to court rival automakers to fill the empty floor space.

But retooling takes time—likely 18 to 24 months before

the plant can see a path back to profitability. For smaller suppliers without Magna's global footprint, the situation is even more dire. "They're basically SOL," says Catherine Karol, a lawyer representing Detroit suppliers, noting that many small shops absorb massive upfront costs they may never recoup.

In St. Clair, Mayor Bill Cedar watches the empty parking lots with a wary eye. The city wooed Magna with tax breaks and a new water tower, hoping for a permanent economic engine. Instead, they found themselves at the center of an industrial cautionary tale.

"Maybe the government should be slower to espouse programs that it thinks will be the new wave," Cedar says. For now, the "new wave" has receded, leaving a quiet factory in a quiet field.



This is the first time in my life as a banker... that I see the policy maker probably being comfortable to hold interest rates or drop them

ROYAL ENFIELD ENTERS ELECTRIC BIKE LANE

Eicher Motors group firm Royal Enfield Thursday announced its foray into the electric motorcycle segment with the launch of Flying Flea C6 bike.



of the day quote

Through each crisis, India has not merely survived. It has in fact emerged remarkably and measurably stronger



SHAKTIKANTA DAS | PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE PM

The challenge is obvious while we are diversifying our sources of energy and critical minerals, and we must; this diversification is also a layered vulnerability, not just dependence on imports but also dependence on political goodwill that allows these imports to flow



TV NARENDRAN | CEO AND MD, TATA STEEL

The recovery in the precious metal may prove short-lived if tensions re-escalate



RENISHA CHAINANI | HEAD OF RESEARCH, AUGMONT

India to grow at 6.6% in FY27: World Bank



FX reserves, strong banks seen cushioning impact on growth as World Bank flags risks to India's FY27 growth from Iran war

- Foreign funds pulled nearly \$19bn between March and early April
Forex reserves rise to \$697.1bn, covering about 11 months of imports
CAD seen widening to 1.8% of GDP in FY27 due to higher energy import bill

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 9: India's expected economic growth of 6.6% for fiscal 2027 could face significant risks as the Iran war fans inflation worries...

services, Kruse added. India's forex reserves—sufficient for at least 11 months as per the Reserve Bank of India—could help, the World Bank said.

RISE IN DEFICITS

India's current account deficit in the fiscal 2027 is expected to increase to 1.8% of gross domestic product due to higher energy import bill...

The general government fiscal deficit is projected to increase marginally to 7.6% of GDP versus 7.3% in the absence of the conflict, according to the bank, as higher energy prices will feed into higher spending on fertilizer and fuel subsidies...

Over the medium term, however, the overall fiscal deficit is projected to decline gradually, the bank added.

Even with the slow-down, India remains among the fastest-growing major economies in the world

AURELIEN KRUSE | ECONOMIST, WORLD BANK INDIA

Unpaid dues: UK court orders SpiceJet to pay \$8mn to engine lessor

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 9: A UK court has ordered India's SpiceJet to pay about \$8 million to an aircraft engine lessor over unpaid rent and maintenance charges for three engines...

London's Commercial Court granted summary judgment Wednesday in favour of Sunbird France 02 SAS over the unpaid rent and maintenance accruals, finding that SpiceJet had no viable defence.

The ruling comes as SpiceJet remains under financial strain following the Boeing 737 MAX grounding and Covid-19 pandemic, and losing market share to rivals such as Akasa Air.

The unpaid rent dates from January 2022, while maintenance accruals date back to November 2020. The lessor issued default notices in July 2022 and repossessed all three engines between late 2022 and mid-2023.

SpiceJet initially hired British solicitors but never filed a defence or response to Sunbird's application, the judgement showed. The airline did not respond to an email seeking comment.

WAR IMPACT FIEO sees 2-3% fall in goods exports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ludhiana, April 9: The country's merchandise exports are expected to register a fall of 2-3 per cent in 2025-26 due to global economic uncertainties...

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President SC Ralhan said that the crisis may have led to a decline in shipments by 7-8 per cent in March.

The joint attack launched by the US and Israel on Iran February 28 severely disrupted the country's exports to West Asia, pushed up shipping freight, air transport prices and insurance costs.

Disruptions in the movement of oil and gas from Middle East countries have also led to an increase in the prices of raw materials such as steel, plastic and rubber, Ralhan said.

Lead with heart, build future generations: Suman

Suman Dalmia is the visionary Chairperson of Indian Public School (IPS) in Sambalpur, Odisha. Under her leadership, the institution has grown into a premier CBSE-affiliated day-cum-residential school known for its holistic approach to education.



SUMAN DALMIA | CHAIRPERSON, INDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Being a major player in the education industry, what do you think are the challenges that the education sector is facing in the country?

As someone deeply connected to children and their journeys, I feel the biggest challenge today is balance. I believe the real challenge is to not lose the soul of education—which is to nurture good human beings, not just high achievers.

The digital revolution is here. What implications will artificial intelligence have in the education sector?

Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool, and like all tools, its impact depends on how we use it. I see AI as an enabler—it can personalise learning, identify gaps, and support both teachers and students in ways we never imagined before.

My journey has been one of learning, patience, and deep emotional connection. Building Indian Public

connection. A child does not just need information; a child needs encouragement, empathy, and guidance. So, while we welcome AI into education, we must ensure that it complements the teacher, not replaces the warmth of a teacher's presence.

The Indian education system has often been criticised for its emphasis on rote memorization and test scores. What measures should be taken to prepare students better?

This is something I feel very deeply about. Learning should never feel like a burden—it should feel like discovery. We need to move from "learning what to think" to "learning how to think." Classrooms must become spaces where children ask questions freely, express ideas without fear, and learn through experience.

How has your journey been so far? What makes Indian Public School a preferable place for students?

My journey has been one of learning, patience, and deep emotional connection. Building Indian Public

School has never been just a professional journey—it has been like nurturing a child. Every challenge has taught me something, and every success has been a collective effort of our students, teachers, and parents.

Your vision and dedication have taken this institution to new heights. What advice would you give to newcomers who want to start their journey in this industry?

Education is not just a profession—it is a responsibility and a calling. My advice to anyone entering this field is simple: lead with your heart. If you truly care for children, you will always find the right path.

SHORT TAKES

TCS net profit jumps

Mumbai: Country's largest IT services company TCS Thursday reported a 12.22 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at ₹13,718 crore. The company had reported a net profit of ₹12,224 crore in the January-March period year ago...

Bullions rally falters

New Delhi: Silver prices declined by ₹7,800 to ₹2.43 lakh per kilogram in the national capital Thursday while gold fell to ₹1.54 lakh per 10 grams as investors booked profits amid concerns over the durability of the fragile ceasefire in West Asia.

CEASEFIRE UNCERTAINTY

Markets pause 5-day rally

Sensex tumbles over 900 pts amid global weakness

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 9: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under heavy selling pressure to close with deep cuts Thursday after investors pared exposure to financial, banking, and IT stocks as renewed tensions in West Asia faded the ceasefire-led optimism.

Weak trends in Asian and European markets, a jump in crude oil prices and uninterrupted foreign fund outflows also made investors jittery in the domestic market.



Snapping its five-session winning run, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 931.25 points or 1.20 per cent to settle at 76,631.65. During the day, it dived 1,215 points or 1.56 per cent to 76,347.90.

to be at risk after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz again in response to Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

From the 30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Larsen & Toubro, Eternal, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the major laggards.

On the other hand, Bharat Electronics, Power Grid, NTPC and Tata Consultancy Services were among the gainers.

On Wednesday, the Sensex jumped 2,946.32 points or 3.95 per cent to settle at 77,562.90. The Nifty soared 873.70 points or 3.78 per cent to end at 23,997.35.

Kanaka takes charge as FGMO of Indian Bank, Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: Kanaka S, General Manager, has taken charge as the Field General Manager (FGMO) of Indian Bank, Bhubaneswar. Prior to this appointment, she served as the Principal of the Staff Training College (IMAGE) of the bank.



The Bhubaneswar FGMO manages operations across Odisha and Chhattisgarh, spanning five zones—Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Sambalpur, Cuttack, and Raipur. The network comprises 278 branches with a total business of Rs. 44,818 crore.

Chandi Bhandar opens 29th store in Chandrasekharpur



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 9: Jewellery brand Chandi Bhandar has opened its 29th store in Chandrasekharpur here Wednesday. The store is located at Kamala Vihar, ground floor, near Tanishq.

To celebrate this grand opening, the store presents an exquisite selection of sterling silver jewellery for every occasion. From 92.5% pure silver utensils to premium jewellery, the store offers an extensive range for women, men, and kids.

Chandrasekharpur has always shown us immense love, and opening our 29th store here is a proud moment. This milestone reflects the trust our customers have in us and marks a beautiful new beginning this Akshaya Tritiya," said Lipsa Hans, Director, Chandi Bhandar.

For women, the collection features zircon-studded necklaces, bangles, earrings, rings, bracelets, and anklets perfect

for both festive celebrations and everyday wear. The Amogh Collection for men showcases bold yet refined bracelets, rings, cufflinks, and chains, while a charming range for kids offers playful yet premium silver designs.

As a special launch offer, Chandi Bhandar is offering up to 30% off on making charges from April 3 to 19, making it the perfect time to discover the brand's signature silver creations.

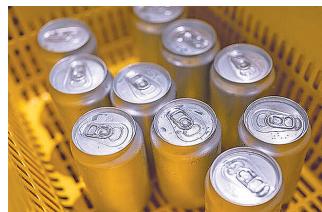
With 12 years of excellence behind it, this launch stands as a testament to the brand's dedication to superior craftsmanship, trusted purity, and evolving design further strengthening its leadership in the silver jewellery space.

As part of its continued expansion, Chandi Bhandar is strengthening its footprint in Odisha, while its pan-India journey begins with its first two stores in Raipur at VIP Road and Pandri.

European brewers push for India tariff ease

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 9: A European industry lobby group, whose members include Pernod Ricard, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Heineken and Carlsberg, has asked India for an exemption from a 10% import duty on glass bottles and aluminium cans, amid shortage fears triggered by the Iran war, a letter, seen by Reuters, shows.



- Alcohol companies in India hit by higher raw material prices
Liquor companies not easily able to pass costs to consumers in India
Fears over shortage of cans, glass bottles could lead to imports

constrained as local manufacturers were not able to operate at optimal capacity.

The letter highlights pressures in India's \$65 billion alcohol market which is facing higher costs for glass bottles, cartons and labels as a result of the Middle East crisis. And in India it is more difficult for

drinks companies to pass this on to customers as retail price changes require government approvals in around two-thirds of India's 28 states.

The drinks industry in the country is already facing an up to 15% cost increase due to higher prices of raw materials like cartons and adhesives.

The Federation's letter requested "a temporary customs duty waiver on packaging imports for aluminium cans and glass bottles," adding that exploring alternative sourcing options from other countries could add 30% to industry's costs of these raw materials.

India's alcohol market is expected to grow at nearly 8% a year until 2033, making it among the world's fastest growing, Coherent Market Insights said. Data from Euromonitor Thursday showed Heineken has the largest share in the beer sector, while Diageo and Pernod top India's spirits mar-

ASIAN BOXING C'SHIPS

# Preeti, Minakshi headline gold rush



**Indian women's team finishes on top with an impressive haul of 10 medals -- four gold, two silver and four bronze**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), April 9:** Reigning world champion Minakshi Hooda and Preeti Pawar led the gold rush for India with two other compatriots also registering victories in the finals to be crowned Asian boxing champions here Thursday. Joining Minakshi (48kg) and Asian Games bronze medalist Preeti (54kg) at the top of the podium were Priya Ghang-

has (60kg) and World Boxing Cup gold medalist Arundhati Choudhary (70kg). The biggest setback for India came in the 57kg final, where reigning world champion Jaismine Lamboria suffered a 0-5 defeat to Thailand's two-time world championships silver medalist Punrawee Ruenros, formerly known as Jutamas Jitpong. India also secured another silver with Alfiya Pathan (80+kg) finishing runner-up. She went down 0-5 to Kazakhstan's Dina Islambekova in her lone bout of the Championships. By reaching the finals, the Indian boxers also secured their spots for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games later this year, in line with the Box-

ing Federation of India (BFI) selection policy. The Indian women's team, thus, as the most successful side finished on top with an impressive haul of 10 medals -- four gold, two silver and four bronze. However, with limited participation in certain weight categories, including fields of just three boxers, the likes of Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Pooja Rani (80kg) and Alfiya essentially received medals for just participating. Minakshi set the tone by securing India's first gold of the day with a commanding 5-0 win over Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan. Preeti extended her fine run with yet another dominant display. She out punched

three-time world champion and Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Huang Hsiao-wen of Chinese Taipei with a unanimous 5-0 verdict. Priya then added to the tally with a clinical 3-0 win over North Korea's Won Un-gyong, while Arundhati impressed with a 4-1 victory against Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish in her final. Earlier in the week, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (54kg), Ankushita Boro (65kg), Lovlina (75kg) and Pooja (80kg) had settled for bronze medals after semifinal exits. In the men's section, Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) and Sachin Siwach (60kg) will compete in their respective finals Friday. India have confirmed 16 medals, the most by any nation in the ongoing edition.

# Mukul guides LSG to win

**KKR's pace woes exposed as LSG pull off last-ball win**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, April 9:** Mukul Choudhary stood against all the odds and remained unbeaten at 54 off just 27 balls as Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) chased down the target of 182 runs on the final ball of the match and registered a three-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata Thursday. Earlier, captain Ajinkya Rahane and young batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi played key knocks, while Rovman Powell provided a late boost as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) posted 181/4 in 20 overs.



Chasing a challenging total on a slow surface, LSG got off to a strong start with Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh scoring freely at over 10 runs per over. The pair took the team to 41 in just four overs. However, KKR bounced back in the fifth over through Vaibhav Arora, who dismissed Markram for 22 and Marsh for 15 in the same over. Captain Rishabh Pant tried to stabilise the innings alongside Ayush Badoni, but struggled for rhythm and was dismissed by Cameron Green for 10. Nicholas Pooran also failed to make an impact, scoring 13 before getting out in the 12th over, while Abdul Samad departed cheaply. With wickets falling at the other end, Badoni held the innings together and scored a well-made 54 off 34 balls, hitting



**IPL STANDINGS**

| TEAMS | P | W | L | NRR    | PTS |
|-------|---|---|---|--------|-----|
| RR    | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2.403  | 6   |
| PBKs  | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0.637  | 5   |
| RCB   | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2.501  | 4   |
| DC    | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0.811  | 4   |
| LSG   | 3 | 2 | 1 | -0.359 | 4   |
| SRH   | 3 | 1 | 2 | +0.275 | 2   |
| GT    | 3 | 1 | 2 | -0.270 | 2   |
| MI    | 3 | 1 | 2 | -0.715 | 2   |
| KKR   | 4 | 0 | 3 | -1.315 | 1   |
| CSK   | 3 | 0 | 3 | -2.517 | 0   |

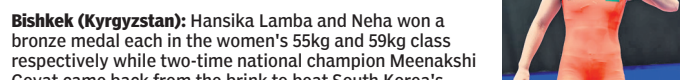
**TODAY'S MATCH**

RR vs RCB  
TIME: 7:30 PM  
Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

seven fours and two sixes. However, he was dismissed soon after reaching his half-century. After Badoni's departure, Mukul took charge of the chase. He played aggressively, hitting multiple sixes and keeping LSG in the hunt. In the final over, LSG needed 14 runs, and Mukul held his nerve, smashing two sixes before completing the winning run on the last ball. He brought up his fifty in just 26 balls and remained unbeaten on 54. **Brief scores:** Kolkata Knight Riders: 181/4 in 20 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 45, Ajinkya Rahane 41, Rovman Powell 39; Digvish Rathi 1-25, Manimaran Siddharth 1-34) lost to Lucknow Super Giants: 182/7 in 20 overs (Mukul Choudhary 54\*, Ayush Badoni 54; Anukul Roy 3-32, Vaibhav Arora 2-38) by 3 wickets

**SNIPPETS**

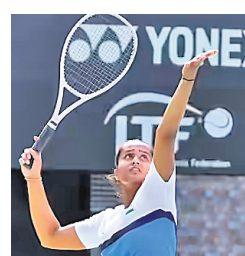
**Hansika, Neha clinch bronze medals, Meenakshi enters final**



**Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan):** Hansika Lamba and Neha won a bronze medal each in the women's 55kg and 59kg class respectively while two-time national champion Meenakshi Goyat came back from the brink to beat South Korea's Seoyoung Park and reach the final of the 53kg category at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships here Thursday. In the women's 55kg bronze medal bout, Hansika was cautious in the first round against Kyrgyzstan's Aruuke Kadyrbek Kyzy. The 19-year-old Indian then opened her account with a take down in the first minute of the second round with a leg attack. She then pressed for the advantage and won the bout 6-1. Neha then added the seventh medal to India's tally when she registered a dominating 10-4 win over Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the women's 59kg bronze medal play-off. Meenakshi, who made it to the Indian team after beating world championships bronze medalist Antim Panghal, was trailing 0-2 till the last 30 seconds against the Korean Thursday. However, the 25-year-old surprised her opponent with a four-point throw and then defended her position to reach the final.

**ASIAN WRESTLING C'SHIPS**

**Vaishnavi, Sahaja lose as Indonesia take unassailable 3-0 lead over India**



**New Delhi:** New Delhi: Vaishnavi Adkar's gallant fight ended with a heartbreaking loss, while Sahaja Yamalapalli was outplayed by world No. 41 Janice Tjen as India went down 0-3 to Indonesia in their third match of the Asia/Oceania Group 1 tie to jeopardise their playoff chances at the Billie Jean King Cup here Thursday. The 21-year-old Vaishnavi,

**BILLIE JEAN KING CUP**

ranked 391 in the world, played her heart out but couldn't get past Priska Madelyn Nugroho, six minutes at the DLTA stadium. It was always going to be a difficult task for Sahaja to beat Janice as she went down 2-6 1-6 to the star Indonesian in the second singles.

**CHAMPIONS LEAGUE**

# Atletico outclass Barca at Camp Nou

*After 15 long years, Diego Simeone ends incredible Camp Nou hoodoo with Atlético Madrid*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Barcelona, April 9:** Atletico Madrid scored twice after Barcelona was reduced to 10 men to earn a valuable 2-0 road win and take the advantage in their Champions League quarterfinal Wednesday. A superb free kick by Julian Alvarez and a second goal by Alexander Sorloth gave Diego Simeone his first win at Camp Nou since Atletico's long-standing coach started his stint with the club 15 years ago. Barcelona had hemmed Atletico into its box when the hosts received a double blow that left Hansi Flick's team down a man and behind a goal just before halftime. After initially showing Cu-barra a yellow card, the referee changed it to a red following a video review. It got worse for Barcelona seconds later when Alvarez curled the resulting free kick around the defensive barrier and past a flying Garcia for the 45th-minute lead.



Lamine Yamal and Marcus Rashford tried to rally Barcelona at Camp Nou and kept the pressure on Atletico despite being undermanned. But that fightback effort was undone when substitute Sorloth shrugged off a challenge by Gerard Martin as he moved to the near post and tapped in a cross from Matteo Ruggeri to double the lead with 20 minutes to play. Barcelona's hopes of ending an 11-year wait to add to its five European Cups now rests on mounting a big win in Madrid Tuesday. Also Wednesday, Paris Saint-Germain beat Liverpool 2-0 in their quarterfinal first leg.

**PSG beat Liverpool**  
Ousmane Dembele had an

off night but Khvicha Kvaratskhelia added another solo goal to his collection as Paris Saint-Germain beat Liverpool 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal Wednesday. The Georgia star cut in from the left flank midway through the second half and, with typically quick feet, skipped past a defender and the goalkeeper before stroking in his team-leading eighth goal of the competition. Desire Doue put the defending champions ahead in the 11th minute with a deflected effort. The Ballon d'Or winner Dembele then spurred three chances at Parc des Princes. PSG coach Luis Enrique said his side should have scored more. Accepting his team was outplayed, Slot explained his decision to be so cautious. When the two teams met last season in the round of 16, PSG advanced on penalties after losing 1-0 at home and winning 1-0 at Anfield.

**SHORT TAKES**

**Oldest Test cricketer CD Gopinath no more**

**Chennai:** India's oldest living Test cricketer CD Gopinath died at the age of 96 here Thursday, ending the last human link to the nation's first Test-winning team. Gopinath, who was the second oldest cricketer in the world after Australian legend Neil Harvey (97), is survived by his wife, children and grand-children. Following his demise, Mumbai's 95-year-old Chandrakant Patankar has become the country's oldest cricketer. He played one Test, against New Zealand in 1955. In the death of Gopinath, India has lost not just its oldest living Test cricketer but also the last personal link to a glorious chapter in the country's rich cricketing history. Four years back, Gopinath had a twinkle in his eye while recounting India's first-ever Test triumph, an innings and eight-run win over England at Chepauk in 1952.

**Ayush enters QFs; Sindhu, Prannoy lose**

**Ningbo (China):** Young Indian shuttler Ayush Shetty entered the men's singles quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Championships with an impressive straight-game win but the seasoned PV Sindhu was eliminated from the women's event here Thursday. World number 25 Ayush, who is also the reigning US Open Super 300 champion, registered a 21-16, 21-12 victory over his world number 20 rival, Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu Jen, in a commanding display. Two-time Olympic medalist Sindhu went down 18-21, 8-21 to second seed Wang Zhiyi of China in a 46-minute last-16 stage match. HS Prannoy, returning after a shoulder injury, fought hard but lost 12-21, 19-21 to China's Weng Hong Yang.

**9-wicket haul: Brazil's Cardoso's T20I history**

**Dubai:** Brazil fast bowler Laura Cardoso entered her name in the record books, becoming the first player in either men's or women's T20I cricket to pick up nine wickets in a single innings. Cardoso delivered the sensational spell against Lesotho, finishing with extraordinary figures of 9/4 from her three overs, the best-ever bowling figures in T20I cricket, at the BCA Kalahari Women's T20I Tournament at Botswana Cricket Association Oval 2 in Gaborone. The previous record was held by Bhutan's Sonam Yeshey, who claimed eight wickets for just seven runs against Myanmar in a men's T20I in 2025.

# Sheetal hails Payal: A podium once lonely, now shared

*The armless archer, Sheetal, was left in awe when an unassuming 18-year-old Payal Nag, a quadruple amputee from Odisha, stunned her to win gold at the World Archery Para Series*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 9:** Having achieved many firsts including becoming the first woman armless archer to be crowned world champion, Sheetal Devi had in her own words often felt "alone" on the podium. That feeling changed in Bangkok when an unassuming 18-year-old Payal Nag, a quadruple amputee from Odisha, filled that void, stunning the reigning world No 1 to win gold at the World Archery Para Series. Payal, who had once learnt by emulating Sheetal at the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex in Katra in 2023, defeated her senior

139-136 in only her second international appearance to clinch the women's compound title April 4. "Pehle aisa lagta tha ki main akeli hoon yahan pe medal jeet rahi hoon, bahut achhi baat hai wo aayi hai (Earlier, I used to feel like I was alone here winning medals; it's a good thing she has come... Now I have a teammate who is also winning). India now will get more and more medals," Sheetal said in a virtual media interaction organised by the Sports Authority of India. If the result was remarkable, what followed at the Bangkok Archery Centre was even more moving. During the podium ceremony, Sheetal was seen helping Payal turn towards the national flag. Using her legs, she gently adjusted the footrest of Payal's wheelchair so that her younger teammate could face the Tricolour as the anthem echoed the arena. Till then, Sheetal had been India's most celebrated para-archer. But in Bangkok, the

**QUEEN MEETS PRODIGY**

spotlight turned on Payal a teenager from Bolangir who was spotted and trained by Kuldeep Vedwan, the same childhood coach of Sheetal Devi. It's 'not a rivalry' but the healthy competition, Sheetal believes, will only strengthen India's medal prospects heading into the Asian Games later this year and the Los Angeles Paralympics in 2028. "We won both in individual and team events also. It's

Winds and losses are part of the game... I shot poorly, but she did better. Overall, it was a proud moment as both medals (gold and silver) came to India. It's a matter of pride that India is dominating in archery and getting so many medals

